

THE
SAINT PAULS MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1872.

OFF THE SKELLIGS.

By JEAN INGELow.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,—
Not light them for themselves ;—for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not."

Shakespeare.

It was a hot afternoon when Anne and I reached Miss Tott's small house. How close and confined it was ! how dirty and faded it looked ! how dim the windows ! and oh, the blinds !

"I am sure I shall detest this part of London," I said, when Anne and I were left alone in my bedroom.

"I dare say this is the closest and dirtiest part, miss," said Anne in her ignorance.

Miss Tott was very kind. My restlessness and my craving for action excited her observation directly, and she took me to church—a particular church that she liked, because the service was so earnest, she said, and so beautiful. She also took me to Covent Garden to choose flowers to help to decorate it. The services of this church, she told me, were so soothing to a spirit wearied with worldly dissipation and the fatiguing pleasures of society. Poor woman ! neither she nor I knew anything about society. She led as dull a life as possible. I gathered that by dissipation she meant balls, parties, theatres, and all the crowd of a London season ; but she could not afford anything of the sort, and I believe she thought she was soothed because some fashionable people, who really were overpowered with the fatigues of too much of this world's pleasure, felt that their minds were soothed.

I wanted not calm, but action. My mind was highly strung : I dreamed of the sea ; I wanted my brother, and felt, day by day more keenly, how cruelly thoughtless it was of Mr. Brandon to have taken him away from me, just that he might more easily amuse him at the time. I wanted also to forget that scene in the wood. The fluttering

of those leaves that let in wandering spots of sunshine I often heard quite distinctly when I sat silent, and the passionate tones of the noble voice that had said ignoble things. It seemed too near me now, too prominent; it was almost intolerable sometimes, and I craved the power to dismiss the mental echoes of its lovely tones, and St. George with them, for ever. So in a very few days, having made up my mind that I could not be happy with Miss Tott, and that I should like to be near the British Museum, I sallied forth with Anne. We bought a map of London, called a cab, and were set down close to that veritable institution.

We stood on the pavement consulting our map, while the sentry looked on with a supercilious air. I decided that I would have lodgings in Russell Square or Gordon Square; so we proceeded to that locality, but did not find any families there who desired to take lodgers. We then bought a copy of the *Times*, and while we ate some soup in a pastry-cook's shop, we looked out for advertisements, and found several that seemed to promise what we wanted. As we left each of these houses, Anne said quietly, but without the least hesitation, that she was sure it was not at all the right place for me to live in, and she was also sure Mrs. Henfrey would agree with her. So I found I had Anne to please as well as myself, and we soon decided against them, and went home tired but hopeful.

The next day, however, in a street near the Museum we found a widow lady, formerly the wife of a curate in that immediate neighbourhood, and she gave us such unexceptionable references, and offered both board and lodging on such reasonable terms, that I thought I must venture to ask whether there was any disadvantage connected with her rooms which made it difficult for her to let them.

She frankly told me that there was: she did not take any boarders but ladies, and she gave music lessons every morning, and had a singing-class twice a week. Ladies did not generally like the music, and would not stay with her. Moreover, she had three little boys, who went to school in the neighbourhood, and therefore she dined at one o'clock, and could not change the hour.

The terms were very reasonable, and I was told that I should have the use of the small dining-room every day after two o'clock; but that all my meals, excepting my tea, I was to take with the family.

Mrs. Bolton, my proposed hostess, did not seem to believe that I would stay with her long,—hardly thought at first that I would come to her at all; but she could refer me to three clergymen, she was an undoubted gentlewoman, and her house, though the furniture was to the last degree faded and shabby, was exquisitely neat and clean. I saw at a glance that Anne was contented, and as we retired she said she thought this was the kind of place Mrs. Henfrey would approve.

"Are you to describe it and Mrs. Bolton to her?" I inquired.

"Yes, ma'am," she replied.

I felt that I was not alone in the world after all; I was looked after through my maid. The idea was not unpleasing. Not one of that family, excepting Valentine, had proposed to correspond with me; but I was thankful to find that Mrs. Henfrey, who took so little notice of any one, was yet under the impression that it behoved her not utterly to lose sight of me. So we took those rooms, and in the course of a few days, having settled money matters with Miss Tott, we went to them.

Excitement, novelty, resolution, and expectation had hitherto kept me up. I had been busy too, and was not aware that the first hour of idleness would be a trying one. So it was, however. We arrived, were welcomed, my boxes were taken upstairs, there was a dispute with the cabman, my clothes were unpacked and laid in the drawers by Anne, and then she retired to her own little room, and I was left alone.

I was standing before the glass, as I well remember, putting on my brooch. It wanted an hour to tea-time, and I had nothing to do. I did not like to go downstairs in the strange house, so I had told Anne to call me when tea was ready.

The first odd sensations that I had were physical. My hand began to tremble so that I could not fasten the brooch, and looking at myself in the glass I perceived a sudden pallor, and began to feel very cold; an extraordinary sense of forlornness followed, and an undefined terror at the prospect which lay before me.

I went and laid myself down on the bed, and drew the quilt over me; a longing that was almost unbearable came and throbbed in my temples and sang in my ears, with the sound of the sea, and the washing of waves, and the voices and trampling of sailors' feet. I wanted Tom and my uncle; I wanted my own home, my cabin, my berth. This outer world that I had been thrust into was almost intolerable; but nothing could be done. I knew not in what waters the "Curlew" might then be rocking; but I could get back to the house I had come from. I yearned for it unspeakably. I thought of Valentine and his father, and wanted to be near them. If it had not been for the bluebells, and all that I had suffered in the wood where they grew, I almost believe that in that hour of misery I should have fled from London and wended my way back again into the neighbourhood that I had so lately left.

But I did nothing.

Oh! how could I—how could I have come away to this desolate London? I moved my head on the pillow, and became conscious that such sudden weakness had overpowered me as left me no strength to rise. I shivered, and faintly longed to draw more clothes over me, but could not.

"What can this be?" was my bewildered thought. "Am I ill, and

therefore nervous and terrified? or has this sudden knowledge of what it is to be desolate made me ill?"

Still lying quiet in my bed, with no power to rise, no power to shed tears, and feeling every limb grow colder, I heard Anne at last; but the sound of her voice was dim. I thought she was outside the door, but opening my dull eyes I saw her leaning over me. I could then rouse myself sufficiently to say that I did not feel well, and she presently brought a cup of hot tea and some bread and butter to the side of the bed; and when I failed to raise my head, she said, tenderly, "What is it, my dear, sweet, pretty lady?" and set down the cup, and, lifting me, laid my head on her bosom, began to chafe my hands and comfort me, drawing the blankets about me, and folding me in her strong motherly arms. Oh! how comfortable was the feeling of nearness to something that lived and cared for me. I drew myself close to her, and held her fast.

To my surprise her next words were, "You're not afraid, ma'am, are you?"

I was afraid, I answered.

"You have no call to be, ma'am. I've been expecting the time when you would break down. You've been too busy by half, thinking of all manner of things, and running about here and there."

I answered, "I could not bear to be idle. I did not wish to think about living alone till I was compelled to do it."

"Well, ma'am, but now you must think about it, because it has begun. You're not so badly off, are you, ma'am, as the disciples were when the Lord of glory told 'em He must leave them, and yet He said that He would send them a Comforter that should make them better off than they had been with Him? Well, ma'am, we've not lost anything so dear as the seeing and hearing of the Saviour on earth; and yet if we pray the Father, He will send the Comforter to us as well as to them. So we have no need to feel as if we were desolate."

I tried to assent, and held her fast lest she should go, for her words were healing medicine to me. She gave me the tea. "Oh!" I said, "I don't know how to live by myself, away from every one that used to care for me."

I asked her to read to me. It was to be something in the Bible that would do me good. I let her make her choice, and to my surprise she began to read what I have always thought the most affecting chapter in the whole Bible, the first chapter of Ruth. It lost nothing by the grave, soft voice of reverent gentleness, nor by the slight provincial accent; and the moment the familiar narrative began, I felt such an anguish of sympathy with that ancient trouble and its mournful relation that my desire to bear up utterly gave way, and I wept with such passionate distress as seemed to be my heart's expression of its own sorrow, and of its aching over an earthly woe.

"Entreat me not to leave thee." No one had said so to me. Thinking of that, I wept yet more, and hid my face and sobbed with yearning unspeakable in the arms of my kind servant.

"O Anne!" were the first words I could utter, "I cannot help this."

"No, ma'am," was her answer, "and you should cry as much as you can; that's what you want; and then you will be ever so much better."

I did cry heartily, but did not feel much the better for it, though I did feel grateful to think of the kind of maid whom I had secured—a woman who, now that I was ill, made herself at once my guardian and my comforter.

She stayed with me that night, and the next morning, as my pulse was to the last degree feeble, she talked of sending for a doctor. That roused me, and I managed to get up and be dressed. That day, however, was a very dark day; all sorts of melancholy fears oppressed me, and anguish of heart at being so utterly away from every one who cared for me.

I remember little that passed. I lay on a small, hard couch, and looked out into the mews, or listened to Anne's reading and talking.

I could eat, I could sleep; there seemed to be nothing the matter with me but sudden sinking of heart, which took away my bodily strength.

On the third morning when I awoke, after a miserable night, I saw Anne enter with a little hamper. "From Mr. Valentine, ma'am," she said, with a smile. I felt roused to interest, and looked on while she opened it.

"How did he know my address?" I asked.

"I wrote, miss: I said I would."

She opened the little hamper. First came out a good deal of wet moss; then a glorious bunch of cut flowers, which it did me good to look at; then a pot with a geranium, covered with buds, and protected by more moss; lastly, a paper bag of new potatoes, and a letter folded up in brown paper. To describe the good it did me to lie all the morning looking at and smelling those dewy flowers would be impossible. The letter too amused me; it was as full of nonsense as it could hold; and I was glad to perceive that, though Anne had given my address, she had kept my illness to herself—thinking, perhaps, that it was my own affair, not that of my boy-lover, who all throughout his letter kept up his character to admiration, and concluded, by way of P. S., with a little sketch of a young man on one knee, presenting a huge nosegay to a girl. A corner of the young man's pocket-handkerchief protruded from his pocket, and was conspicuously marked V. M.

In spelling and puzzling over this letter I spent some time. I then

sat up and enjoyed my delicate new potatoes, and was truly grateful to find that my strength and spirits were returning.

I got up, came downstairs, and enjoyed some tea. Oh the welcome change ! and oh the peaceful sleep that followed and lasted all night long !

I cannot say that during those dreary days any distinct trains of argument had passed through my mind which tended to prove to me that as solitude was my lot I had better be resigned to it ; but I now felt very much resigned. Very different from the despairing sensations of my first waking in that house was the waking of this sunny morning. Anne had done me good, time had done me good, and above all the comforting reading and talking had done me good ; and in two days—that is before I had finished the last of my new potatoes—I was able to take a walk, and in less than a week I was beginning to look for some little boys who were obliging enough to want to learn Latin.

I soon found that my only chance of earning as much money as I wanted was to be a morning governess, for all the parents to whom I applied wanted to have their children taken care of for the whole morning. From nine till one was the very shortest time that I was asked to spend with any family ; and for that amount of attention twenty pounds a year was about the average sum offered. This money would not have enabled me to learn wood-engraving, for which I had already found a master.

My dreams of giving an hour's lesson a day were completely overthrown ; but twenty-five pounds a year I was determined to have ; and at last I got it, from a certain elderly widower, whose eldest son was ten years old, but delicate, and not fit for school. There were two other boys and a girl, and I agreed to teach them from nine o'clock till one.

I had taken Anne with me, and she sat in the room where my elderly widower was conducting his examination as to my qualifications. "Is that your mother?" he asked when he had satisfied his mind.

"No, my maid."

Finding that astonishment at the notion of my having a maid was overpowering his weak faculties, even to the endangering of my prospects, I explained to him, that I possessed enough to live upon, but wished to learn an expensive art, and therefore must add to my income.

As he did not recover from his astonishment, I next told him where I was living ; and after I withdrew, he came, like a careful widower, to speak to my hostess, and having ascertained from her that what I had said was true, he left a message to the effect that the sooner I could begin my instructions the better.

Accordingly I began to teach the very next morning. Anne went

with me, and came to fetch me at one o'clock. I found my pupils very refractory at first ; but by degrees I got them into good order, for happily there was no one to interfere. My employer was never at home ; indeed from the day when he engaged me I saw him no more ; and the nurse upheld my authority, and treated me with respect.

For the first fortnight of my governess life I was too much tired during the afternoon to do more than take a quiet stroll with Anne, or lie and listen to her reading ; but after that, as vain regrets moved further into the background, I became stronger, and began to take my lessons in wood-engraving with great delight. But the philanthropy, the charity, the usefulness, where were these ? I felt ashamed of myself sometimes when I looked at Anne's quiet face, and considered how I had led her to believe that she should spend her life with me in works of charity and mercy.

I had been considering that I should like to have a district of poor people, and when I mentioned it to Anne I found her in possession of some information regarding the parish in which we were, and the clergyman whose church we attended. Mrs. Bolton knew the clergyman ; he was in great want of ladies' help, both in the Sunday-school and among the poor.

Quite fearlessly and ignorantly, I immediately said that I would take a district and also a class in the school, and that Anne might have a class also, if she wished it. She was evidently delighted, and I felt pleased when I set off with Mrs. Bolton to call on the said clergyman, who proved to be a pleasant middle-aged man, and was quite willing to accept as much help as we could give ; but shook his head at the notion of the district, remarking that I was "very young, very young."

Mrs. Bolton replied that my maid would always go with me.

"Well, well," he said, "I don't like to debar you from the blessed office of ministering to others ; but the district just now vacant is down a close court ; the people are rough, poor, untutored ; and I can hardly accustom myself to the notion of a district visitor going about with a maid."

"I thought it would not be right," I said, "for me to go alone."

He smiled. "I quite agree with you," he said ; and he went on, "I suppose I must allow it. I wish I could get older visitors, Mrs. Bolton. What sort of a person is this maid ?"

Anne, who had walked with us, was sitting in the hall ; I had her brought into the room where we were talking, and the moment he saw her his countenance cleared. "You wish to have a class, I believe ?"

"If you please, sir ; I should think it a great privilege."

"I have a class of little boys that no one likes to take."

"Any class, you please, sir. I have no wish to choose."

"Can you be punctual ?"

Anne looked at me, and when I said that I would take care she had it in her power to be punctual, he answered, "Give her the power, and I think she will find the will," and he held out his hand to shake hands with her.

Our business was then arranged with great ease: no more doubts whether or not I should have the district, no more hesitation about my class; but I observed that though the instructions about these matters were ostensibly given to me, they were intended for Anne's edification quite as much as mine.

I cannot help laughing now when I think of the first visit we paid to that district.

I put some buns in my bag for the children, some tracts for the parents, and took with me a pencil and some paper on which to write tickets for meat and bread. We were not to give away money.

The first house in that court contained six rooms, in every room a family. Family No. 1, as we saw from the outside, had its lower panes stuffed with rags. We knocked at the door and entered.

A villainous-looking woman was sorting rags on the floor, and three ill-favoured girls were helping her; two sickly babies were crawling about half naked. The disgusting odour of that room cannot be conceived by any who have not entered such a one; and no wonder, for they were presiding over a heap of damp and filthy shoes, a heap of greasy silk, a heap of old rope, of threadbare cloth, and, lastly, a heap of dusty tow that one of the girls was pulling out of the remains of a mattress.

The woman came forward, gave me a suspicious look, and asked me what I wanted.

I could scarcely breathe, partly for the vile smell, partly for the particles of tow. I was fain to ask her if she would like a tract.

"Can't read."

I looked towards the girls.

"None on 'em can't read."

"Would they like to learn?"

"No, they wouldn't."

"This is the district lady," Anne remarked.

"I knows 'em; often seen 'em with their worked petticoats. Never did me no good."

"Is there anything you're in want of?" I was fain to ask, and I fumbled for my pencil.

"We should like a bit o' tea and sugar."

So I wrote a ticket, and we meekly withdrew.

"O Anne," I said, "I am sure I shall never dare to go near that woman without giving her something;" and we were both so sick and faint with the odious fetid smell that we stood a few minutes on the stairs to recover ourselves before we knocked at door No. 2.

Door No. 2 opened into a little room not eight feet square, and by

the fire sat a cobbler at his work, mending old shoes and burning the bits of leather he cut off from them. The smell of new leather burning is bad enough ; but the smell of old leather burning is a smell to remember for ever.

The man begged our honours to come in, and we contrived to do so, bearing the atmosphere as well as we could. A snuffing noise arrested our attention ; it seemed to come from the wretched bed, and indeed a woman was lying there under the clothes, as we soon perceived by the thrusting out of a very dirty hand.

"Your wife is ill !"

No ; begging our honours' pardon, she was just a little overcome with the *dhruink*, and sleeping it off, the crathur. She been to Common Garden, she had, and brought a lovely barrowful of frew-it, and there it was.

There it was, indeed, in baskets under the bed ! The man drew out first a basket of green gooseberries ; then one of mackerel, anything but fresh ; then several huge bundles of rhubarb ; lastly, some brocoli.

Anne asked if they always kept the things they sold under the bed.

"Sure-ly," said the man ; "where would we find a better place !"

Hopelessly filthy and ragged he was ; the floor was caked with dirt. I should have liked to talk with him, but felt so much overpowered that I was fain to escape. Anne followed, looking pale and dispirited.

When we knocked at the other rooms, our cobbler followed us to explain that the owners of the rooms were out. There was only one room occupied—that was the garret, for a woman was sick there. To her room we bent our steps, and opened the door. No bed presented itself ; only a heap of clothing, and shavings, and a mat. On it lay a woman with a brown face, dull eyes, and white lips. She was rambling in her speech ; and Anne, unable to breathe, rushed to the window and threw it up. The sweet sunshiny air came in, and the woman, who had just awoke, seemed at the sight of us to be trying to collect her poor scattered thoughts and speak coherently.

She longed for a cup of tea, and Anne promised she should have one,—leaving me to watch while she ran out to buy some.

In ten minutes she returned with some wood, lucifer matches, tea, sugar, a little loaf, and a mug with some milk in it.

She had bought the mug, and it was well she had, for there was no crockery visible on the bare shelf. She went and borrowed a kettle, made a fire, washed the poor creature's face and hands, set her up, and brought her the tea.

"I don't get no better," said the woman, moaning, and scarcely appearing to be surprised at what passed.

"How can you expect it, my poor soul," said Anne, "when you're so lost in dirt ?"

The woman ate slice after slice of bread and butter, and drank several cups of tea with eager relish. Then I asked her if she would

let me read a chapter in the Bible to her, and she consented ; but I seemed to read the chapter in a dream, for she had begged to have the window shut again, and the consequence was that when I had reached the last verse I fainted away, for the first and only time in my life, and became quite insensible.

I suppose Anne dragged me out of the room, for when I opened my eyes I found that she was seated on the stairs with me on her knee ; and she was so pale that I wondered whether she would faint too.

There was something so ridiculous in our situation that we both smiled.

"O Anne," I exclaimed, "I would not be found here for a good deal. This is too ridiculous. What shall we do?"

"We certainly are beaten off the field this time, ma'am," said Anne.

We got up, and slowly went home, where we refreshed ourselves with a cup of strong tea and some biscuits. I began to perceive that these people were sunk too low to be reached by me. I could not hope to do more than give them bread and meat tickets, and I began to wish I had chosen some other useful work instead of a district.

Anne, however, was not of my mind. As she walked with me to give my pupils their lessons, she asked if she might visit the sick woman again. I said she might, and gave her half a crown ; whereupon she departed, with a serene look of joy on her sweet plain features. All the real usefulness was evidently to be hers : I could neither clean rooms nor wash clothes, and both these things she meant to do.

When she was describing to me in the afternoon how she had hired an iron pot of the cobbler for twopence, and how a woman who had a tolerably decent room had agreed to take in our poor patient for the night, and help to limewash the walls and ceiling, being paid for her work of course, Anne observed, "I feel now, ma'am, as if we should be of some use."

"We!" I exclaimed.

"Why, ma'am, you support me, and my time is yours ; so if you choose to give it back to me, why you give it to them."

I said I would give her all I could of her time, and five shillings a week of the ten I was earning by my little pupils. The other five went for the lesson in wood-engraving.

In a few days Anne bought some coarse calico and a quantity of clean chaff such as is often used in her part of the country to make beds of. She made the calico into a bag six feet long and three feet wide, and this when sewed up with the chaff in it was a clean and decent thing to lie on. The sick woman's rags were then sold by her own consent, and we bought a very little cheap furniture for her ; but Anne remarked of her that she was not poor,—at least she had no business to be poor—for when in health she earned about eleven

shillings a week. She was what is called a decorator. She made ornaments such as soldiers and footmen wear, doing the work at her own place, and having plenty of clothes and food when in health, but never laying anything by in case of illness.

In about ten days Anne proposed to me to come and see her. No one could have recognised her. She lay pale and gaunt on her decent bed; her room was sweet and fresh, her window clean. Anne left me with her, to go and look after another sick person, and the woman's eyes followed her; then as she shut the door, they opened wide, and she said to me with a gesture of awe, "Ain't she a rare one, missis?"

"Yes, she has been very kind to you, has she not?"

"Been everything, she has; but for all that she telled me truly as it was you that pervided the brass."

"Yes, I gave her the money. I liked to do that, for I could not wash and clean for you as she could."

"No, ye couldn't; I wouldn't let you come inside my place now, if it wasn't so clean."

"Yes, it is fit for any one to sit down in now. I hope you mean to keep it so."

"*Mebby* I shall. *She'll* turn her back on me if I don't."

"She would be sorry, no doubt, after all the trouble she has taken; and you know we ought to try and please those who have been good to us."

"Nobody never was good to me but *her*—and you."

"Yes, some One has been."

"I expect you mean *Him*."

Before I had made up my mind what she meant by this allusion, which was made with a serious air, but no particular reverence, she added, "I never heerd tell on *Him* before she came and read out of her book." Anne had told me of this, to me, hitherto unheard-of ignorance, so I did not throw the woman back by expressing any amazement, but merely said that I had got a book like Anne's and would read to her, if she pleased.

"Well, missis," she answered, "I don't mind if ye do. I'd heerd a good lot about Adam and Eve, ye know, and I telled her to read that, if so be 'twas there."

"Well, and what did you think of them?" I inquired, hardly knowing how to meet such a degree of simpleness and ignorance in a great learned city, which one does not find in the poorest country district.

"Think on 'em! Well, you see, she couldn't keep her hands off them apples, and got into trouble. Serve her right, that's what I think, for it wasn't the hunger druv her to it."

"But you don't think she was any worse than we are, do you?"

"Not worse than such as we; but gentlefolks are different."

"Yes, of course they are; for when gentlefolks do wrong they are worse than you are, for they are not driven by hunger, any more than Eve was."

The woman laughed, but not scornfully. "Well, missis," she said, "I should fairly like to know what you was iver driv to that was bad, or *her* either."

"Well, I have told lies, and though I have always had plenty to eat and money in my pocket, I have often been discontented and wished for other people's things."

"Call that bad! Lor' bless yer, that's nothing. We're the real bad uns; a'most all on us is bad. We're lost; that's what we are."

"Then you are just what the Lord, the Saviour, came to save. He came to seek and to save that which was lost."

"Well, now, if that ain't a'most the very same the other one said. Ye both talk alike."

"You ought to believe us, for you can see very plainly that we wish to be your friends."

"Ay! look what ye've done for me. Well, I'm willing to *oblige ye*. Is that book what they read in churches, missis?"

"Yes, the same book."

"Don't say so! Well, I am willing to *oblige ye*. I'll hear some more on't, if ye want me to."

Accordingly I read two or three of the parables to her. "And there was a certain rich man," impressed her strangely. I could perceive her secret wonder and curiosity. "Is that the sort of thing you expected our Lord to say?" I ventured to inquire.

"No, it ain't,—no. Do they read that in the church? Do they read it *up*?"

"Yes, certainly."

Then she laughed with evident enjoyment. "Well," she said, "it's a queer thing for the gentlefolks to hear, so 'tis."

"Yes," I answered; "but in this book you'll find that the rich generally get the worst of it in many ways."

There was nothing about "those rascally upper classes" here; if there had been, I should naturally have chosen something different to read. She was sunk in her own opinion—could not see that she, and such as she was, were of any account, and required to be set in her place again, and made to understand her own value.

By degrees, as Anne got one and another of these rooms into something like order, I was allowed to enter them. I set up a little club, and induced some of these people to pay money into it weekly,—many of them earned a good deal at different times,—but even this club had soon to be given up to Anne, for those men who were costermongers came home at night with their money, and if she would go for it then, she was welcome to it; if not, a good deal of it went for drink.

But I cannot chronicle this good woman's deeds. She devoted nearly her whole time to this wretched court—nursed the sick, taught several young girls to work with their needles, and got the men to lay up a good deal of money. All this was set in train before I had been in London six weeks, and at that time I received my first letter from my uncle, and gave up any lingering hope I might have cherished concerning the return to a sea life, for once and for ever.

There was very little in the letter ; but I gathered that my uncle missed me, though he could not have me back again ; that he was very uneasy about Tom, who was not conducting himself so as to please him. There was no letter from Tom to me, and my uncle had not heard from Australia.

If my relations took but little notice of me, Valentine seemed determined to take a great deal. He wrote continually, sent me plants, which were always more or less damaged in the transit, and soon faded in the London atmosphere, sent me fish of his own catching, the latest news of Captain Walker and Lou, and the most authentic accounts of Prentice and Charlotte. For the latter I did not care ; but I cared for the letters, and for the kind-hearted fellow who wrote them. It was sweet and flattering to me to think that there was somebody in the world who liked me well enough to wish to hear from me.

Poor Valentine ! when I had been in London about six weeks, he wrote to me in very low spirits to tell me that his lingering hopes of being allowed to go to Cambridge were all over ; for he had been spitting blood, and Doctor Limpsey had advised his father not to let him study, and to keep him at home. In his usual careless fashion he spoke of this symptom as if it was not of the slightest real consequence, and described his father's depression and Giles's anxiety as equally needless and provoking ; in short, as a proof of what unreasonable people they were.

I believe the knowledge of his illness and the destruction of his cherished wish made me feel more affectionately towards Valentine. Indeed, he was the only person who took the trouble to bring himself before me ; and his circumstances naturally led me to think of him a good deal, and gradually to feel far more real regard for him than I had ever done when we were together.

I led a singular life during that warm summer and autumn. I taught all the morning, I sat at my wood-cutting in the afternoon, and took a stroll with Anne in the evening. Now and then I went into the district myself, and marvellous indeed were the changes I beheld. No lady had hitherto been admitted within most of those dreary dens ; the district lady had been met at each door where the inmates were at home, and had been accosted with appeals for bread, or the favourite want, "a bit o' tea and sugar ;" but many of the parents were never at home during the day-time,—that is to say, earlier than five or six o'clock,—and the children were generally

turned into the streets to pick up whatever came in their way. There were thirty-four rooms in my court, which means that there were at the very least thirty-four families, some of them being large ones. The people were chiefly either decorators or costermongers. The former kept reasonable hours ; but the latter, as they were generally out at Billingsgate or Covent Garden by three o'clock in the morning, frequently came home, slept away the hot summer afternoons (the afternoon being the slack time for their trade), and then rose and had a good supper, and if it did not rain and was sultry, sat in rows on the curbstone in the court and gossiped till midnight.

I have several times entered a room and found the whole family sound asleep at four o'clock in the afternoon. They seemed scarcely ever to trouble themselves either to undress or to wash. The men would lie on the rags in their good hobnailed boots, and the women in their shawls just as they went out of doors, for they seldom wore bonnets. Not one family in the court, as far as Anne could discover, earned less than seventeen shillings a week. Of course, when what the children picked up is added to this sum, it is evident that there ought to have been no desperate poverty, excepting where there was a bad husband,—that is, a drunken husband, for nothing else is anything accounted of in that class of people. It includes everything that one would suppose to be unbearable—specially beating of wives, for it was allowed on all hands that none but drinking men ever ill-used their wives to the extent of beating or giving them black eyes.

Till Anne went among them, some of them had absolutely never heard the name of the Saviour of mankind ; but I never heard of one who did not know that there is an Almighty God, and of but one person who could not say the Lord's Prayer.

They never come into contact with any educated person ; they are literally the servants of servants. The barrow-men and women supplied the lowest classes with their eatables. The decorators did not appear to have direct intercourse with army clothiers, but with men who went round to collect and pay for the work as they finished it.

I do not of course speak of the London poor in general, nor even of barrow-men and decorators in general, but only of the few families who came under my own observation and that of Anne Molton.

Anne Molton, as I presently found out, was a very remarkable woman ; and as soon as I had fairly humbled my mind down to the point of being certain that she could do far better and far more for the poor than I could, I took the lower place, and earned the money for her to spend. She was not hasty, but as opportunity offered she won the goodwill of the "pariahs." She helped many of them to limewash their rooms ; she taught the women to mend their clothes, and the girls to sew, to cook, and to wash.

Washing, incredible as it may appear, was almost a new art in that miserable locality. It was the effect of the civilization she was intro-

ducing : for many of the men had absolutely no linen, and others had long disused it ; but she sold them shirts at the cost price of the calico, and then taught their wives to take pride in washing and ironing them, and in making more.

It was the same with clothing for themselves and their children. Anne began by exhibiting coarse shirts made by herself and me. The women paid for them in small instalments of a few pence each week ; then subscribed for more calico, and she cut it out for them, and taught some of them to work.

It was very striking to my mind to observe that, so far as that little court was concerned, almost all the misery, sickness, and poverty were owing to the faults of the people. They need not have been wretched.

The filth in which they lived made them crave liquor to overcome the faint sensations that close rooms and exhausted air must always cause. Drinking, and so having not enough money left to buy wholesome food, was sure sooner or later to cause sickness, and then came poverty, bitter and almost hopeless, for they pawned all their comforts, and it was rarely that they raised the money to get them out.

Many of them had no beds,—never had had. Their fathers and mothers before them had pawned them ; the children, early accustomed to gather together the rags and sacks of shavings or old mats that formed the greater part of their furniture, would sleep on them without washing away any of the dirt that during many days they had contracted in dirty London.

This state of things we could not for several months do much to remedy, excepting in the case of the sick woman, who, when she got better, never sank again into dirt and desolation, but earned her weekly money, spent it according to Anne's advice, and lived decently.

I think it was when I had learned wood-cutting about four months that one day my usually silent master expressed himself greatly pleased with one of my performances, and asked whether I knew that I was learning the art much faster than most people did.

As he had never volunteered any praise before, but generally looked at my drawings and my cuts with a silent elevation of the eyebrows, I had become accustomed to think that I surprised him by the slowness of my progress, and had risen early to work before breakfast, and had always spent two hours in the evening over my performances, in the vain hope that some day he would smile, instead of so provokingly indicating his amazement, and as I thought his discomfort. This remark astonished me, and I said that it was most unexpected.

"A friend of mine," he continued, "that I often show your proofs to, was saying, *ma'am*"—here he paused in his work to blow away some minute shavings which the tool was turning up, and went on with a deliberation which tired my patience greatly,—"*he was say-*

ing that he'd give you five shillings apiece for cuts like these, if you wanted to sell 'em."

"Indeed," I exclaimed; "then wouldn't it be better to let this friend of yours have them?"

"I wouldn't," he answered, "if I was you."

"Why not, Mr. Curtis?"

"Why, miss, because they're worth more." He continued to examine my work with his glass; then laid it down and slowly plodded through the rest of his speech. "You see, miss, you can draw, that's where your talent lies. You've had good instruction too—consequently you've learnt no more of me than how to engrave your own drawings. There's hardly a wood-engraver that I know who does that. If they get a book to illustrate, they employ artists to make the drawings, and then they engrave 'em, and so you see two people have to live—the artist and the engraver. Now you don't draw first-rate by any means, but there's a vast lot of drawings engraved that are worse than yours."

"What do you advise me to do, then?"

"Why, ma'am, you want some first-rate drawing lessons. You want lessons for the next six months."

"I cannot afford them, Mr. Curtis."

Mr. Curtis elevated his eyebrows and said no more; but the next lesson he gave me he had a long fit of silence, and when he had set my work in order he grew red in the face and breathed heavily, as he often did when some mistake of mine, or some information to be given, compelled him to open his mouth. At last he said—

"My friend, miss, that I spoke to you about——"

"Yes, Mr. Curtis."

"He is an artist."

"Is he?"

"Yes, miss; he has a good many books to illustrate. He illustrated that book of arctic travels that I showed you, and that new work on natural history."

I wondered what was coming, but to have spoken would only have put my master out.

"He and I have been thinking of a plan," pursued Mr. Curtis.

"About me?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, miss; you see you want drawing lessons. Now he says, does my friend, that he would instruct you in drawing twice a week for six months, and let you see him draw on the block occasionally, if you'll pay him with all the engravings you do in the six months."

"Would you advise me to accept his offer?"

"Decidedly, miss, if you mean to go on taking lessons of me at the same time. He will lose by you the first three months; but unless we're both very far out, you'll make it up to him the second, for

you'll know more of drawing by what he'll teach you, and more of engraving by what I shall."

"Then by that plan I make my drawings under his superintendence, and engrave them under yours? I still pay you half a crown a lesson, and I pay him nothing but the result of my work?"

"That is all, miss."

"But if I agree to this, what do you think I shall be able to earn at the end of the six months if I spend about four hours a day on the engraving?"

"About two pounds a week, perhaps, ma'am."

I took a few days to consider, and then decided to accept the terms offered; but, though I am not by any means of an idle disposition, or languid in the prosecution of my work, I certainly did feel so thoroughly overcome with fatigue sometimes, that I almost thought I must give my project up. I taught my little pupils from nine till one; that was the easiest part of my day; the wood-engraving demanded at the least two hours a day, and the drawing no less. During August and the two following months I could work an hour before breakfast, and also in the afternoon, and the wood-engraving happily could be done by candle-light, so that I still retained time for my walk and for a little reading. I had still only the five shillings a week that I earned, and did not spend in lessons, to bestow in charity. But Anne did such wonderful things with it, that I came to think it a respectable sum. And at the end of the first and second quarters, having spent in necessary outgoings the whole of my income to within a few shillings, I was fain to take Anne's own view of the matter, and allow myself to hope that supporting her, and letting her devote herself to the poor, was my appointed charity.

She still presided over my morning toilet, and she took me to, and fetched me from, my pupils; she also walked with me when I went shopping or took exercise: that was all. The rest of her time—that is, her morning and her evening—I gave her for the district, for her club, her lending-library, and her evening-school.

It was a great privilege, and I hope it raised the tone of my mind, to live with such a woman. Her contentment, her almost rapture in her work, were wonderful to see. She spent, I knew, at least half her wages on her charities; yet, though shabbily dressed, she was always neat, clean, and respectable in appearance; and the more she dwelt among the wretched hovels of the poor, the better and the stronger she seemed. This went on till the Christmas holidays; for I had three weeks' holidays at Christmas, and I enjoyed them quite as much as my pupils did—perhaps more.

Strange to say, I was decidedly happy; I am quite sure of it. I had no society; but, then, I was not fitted to shine in society. I had no amusements; but, then, I had not a leisure hour in which I could

have enjoyed them. I was absolutely so busy, that I had no time for regrets ; and when I went to bed, I was too tired to lie awake long and think.

In saying that I had *no* amusements though, I am ungrateful. I had the amusement of Valentine's letters, and very droll these were ; very boyish of course, and sometimes not flattering, but graphic and full of fun. They were not, I suppose, like the letters of a lover—at least, they were not at all like such letters as they appear in books, and I never saw but one in manuscript ! Valentine, in his letters, often apologised to me for not having written so soon as he meant to have done, by acknowledging that he had forgotten, and sometimes he gave as a reason for writing that he supposed I should be uneasy if I did not hear from him. Most natural things to be said by a brother ; but not very natural to be felt by a lover. I was, therefore, the more to be pardoned for not considering Valentine to be my lover, and for treating him, as I always had done, with frank affection.

Affection I certainly felt for him in no common degree. I was even willing to devote my life to him, in any other way than the way which he still often proposed.

One bitterly cold day, during my holidays, I had just dined ; Mrs. Bolton was gone out with her little boys, and Anne, during a brief period of sunshine, was trying on a new gown, which she and I had just finished, for my wearing. It was the first I had had since coming to London, and Anne was congratulating herself on the fit, when the servant came up and gave me a card—

MR. VALENTINE MORTIMER.

"He's in the parlour, miss," said the servant, and disappeared.

A visitor—a visitor from Wigfield, too—was such an unexpected thing, that I stood dumb and motionless. Anne took out my best brooch, put it on, and had smoothed my hair, before it occurred to me that I must run down to see Valentine.

"How do I look, Anne ?" I exclaimed, meaning, "Am I neat and fit to go down ?"

Anne pulled a tacking thread out of my new gown, smiled, and said, "Well, miss, what with the dress, and what with the colour in your cheeks, I never saw you look better."

I understood that involuntary smile perfectly well, but had neither power nor inclination to remove the impression which had given rise to it.

I ran downstairs, and there stood the great long-legged fellow, with a boa round his neck. We shook hands, and launched into home talk directly.

St. George, he said, had brought him up for some further advice ;

but he made light of his symptoms, and looked so well that I began to agree with him, and think there could not be much the matter.

He soon began to examine the wood-engraving.

"Then your brother is in London?" I said, and I felt rather alarmed at the notion that he might appear.

"Yes; where do you think he is now? He left me at the door. step here, and went to inspect the copper that Anne is having built in the district."

"Inspect the copper? What does he know about it?"

"Oh, it's just in his line; he is learned, you know, about model cottages, and estimates for schools, and all that sort of humbug."

"You should not call it humbug. But how did he hear of it?"

"Why, you mentioned it to me, didn't you?—how your uncle had sent you ten pounds, and how Anne had hired a room for the neighbourhood to have their wash in—do their ironing?"

"O yes, I remember; but I did not think I had said anything about the copper, and that it wanted inspection; but it does, for it smokes and won't act. But how does he know the way to the district?"

"Oh, he has a natural genius for ferreting out dirty places. Dick has got a curacy in London—hard work, and no pay worth mentioning. It will be the delight of his little High Church soul."

"It appears to me that you are deteriorating!"

Valentine did not honour this remark with any notice, but went on—

"Sister is going to send Dick a hamper almost every week. She is afraid he should be starved. That fellow is a saint; but I don't see why he need pat the heads of the dirty beggar children with his bare hands."

"Does your brother ever do that?"

"No. He is a saint too in his way; but, my dear Dorothea, there are simple saints in this world, and there are knowing ones."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Let the mutton and onion sauce appear."

Nicholas Nickleby.

VALENTINE and I were still cosily talking when there was a ring at the bell, and Mr. Brandon was shown in. I had expected to feel very uncomfortable, nervous, and bashful on the occasion; but after the first moment I did not, for the simple reason that he showed all those feelings so strongly as absolutely to put me at my ease.

I was surprised certainly; but the relief was so great that I could not pity his discomfort, and I was glad to be certain, as I now was

that he was aware of the absurdity (to use no harsher word) of his last conversation with me.

He too seemed curious about the wood-engraving; and when Valentine had pushed him into a chair, and placed a block of wood before him, he recovered himself so far as to ask some questions about it; not of me, however, but of his brother.

"What's this stuff for! It looks like whitening."

"Why, you put your finger into it, and smooth it carefully over the surface of the block to make it white."

"Well, I have stuck my finger in."

"Smooth away then, old fellow."

"There—what next? But, Miss Graham, you see this: I suppose you don't disapprove."

"No—I'll answer for her—you don't, D. dear. Now, Giles, draw something on the white surface, and I'll show you how to cut it out."

"You will, will you? I should hope I have sense enough to do that myself. Here's a little digger that looks just suitable."

He began to draw, and Valentine and I, seated on the sofa close at hand, went on talking at our ease till he suddenly announced that he had made a drawing.

"Well, dig it out then," said Valentine, "since you will have it that you know how. I say, D. my dear, what's this thing? it looks like an empty oil-flask corked and turned upside down, and I declare it's full of water."

"It's only to throw a light upon my engraving when I work by lamp-light. Look, here is a wide-necked bottle full of sand. I insert the narrow neck into the wide neck to make it steady, and set a candle behind: the result is that a beautifully clear and soft spot of light falls through upon the bit of the wood I am engraving."

"I wish you'd throw a light, then, on this fellow's work. Look what he's doing!—he's cutting away all the strokes and leaving the ground."

"Just what you were going to do yourself!"

"D., I shall learn to engrave—will you teach me?"

"I am not far enough advanced for a teacher."

"Well, but sit down and let us see you do a little piece."

"By-the-by," said Mr. Brandon, "have you, Valentine, made any way as concerns the antipodes?"

"No," said Valentine, "I haven't settled the preliminary point yet. I was just going to introduce it when you came in." And thereupon he hung over my chair, and began to watch the progress of the graving tool, till, hearing a curious little noise behind me, I turned and found that he had taken Mrs. Bolton's slate, whereon she usually wrote her engagements, had written a few words on it, and was holding it up for his brother's inspection.

As I turned I, of course, saw what Valentine had written ; it was, "I could do it if you'd only go for another half-hour."

Mr. Brandon presently rose with an indulgent smile, which, when he met my eyes, became a laugh, in which Valentine joined, and I also, though I hardly knew why : he marched out of the room, and Valentine after him. I heard some slight discussion. I also heard the words "blockhead," "goose," and "silly fellow" used, but in a particularly good-humoured tone, and immediately after the street-door was opened, shut again, and Mr. Brandon walked past the window. Wondering what this meant, I presently opened the door, and there I found Valentine laughing in the passage.

"Why don't you come in?" I said. "And what have you done with your brother?"

"He's only gone out for an airing," replied Valentine.

"Do you want to go too?" I asked.

"No, I came to talk to you."

"What, whilst I stand with the door-handle in my hand, and you lean against the wall, with your head among the great-coats. Ridiculous!"

Finding that he still stood and laughed, I shut the door; and he instantly opened it again, and looked into the room, exclaiming—

"Dorothea, did you know that Giles was going to New Zealand again next week?"

"No."

"Well, he is, and he thought I'd better tell you."

"Tell me!—why?"

"You need not look so astonished, so almost frightened. Why, because—oh, I don't know exactly. Do you think New Zealand is a nice place?"

"Yes, I have every reason to think so."

"You see, D., I have nothing; but Giles said that when he was in New Zealand he could buy me some land, if I in the meantime would learn farming. I have been turning my attention to it."

"What, is your brother going to take you with him?"

"Oh, no; of course not. We should neither of us think of leaving this country permanently so long as my father is with us."

"Well, Valentine?"

"Well, Dorothea, supposing that you liked a fellow, and his destination was New Zealand—would it make you like him less?"

"No."

"Ah! but would it prevent your marrying him?"

"If I could make up my mind to marry 'a fellow,' I should marry him wherever he was going."

All this had passed as he stood holding the door-handle, his tall person being half in the room and half out.

He now shut the door and came in and sat by me on the sofa, as if he had no more to say. But it appeared that he had, for the corners of his mouth relaxed into a smile, and he exclaimed—

"What do you think that humbug Prentice has done?"

"Been plucked at Cambridge?"

"Oh, no; that's to come."

"Broken off his engagement to Charlotte?"

"Why, not exactly; but they've returned each other's letters, because he says he finds that what he felt for her was merely friendship."

"Oh! indeed, like what you feel for me. But I'm sorry for poor Charlotte!"

"Don't be disagreeable; 'comparisons are odious' (Sheridan). You need not be sorry for Charlotte, for she confided to me the other day that if she hadn't been afraid of being laughed at she would have broken it off long ago. It was such a bore to be always writing to him. She never could think what to say."

"Perhaps you can sympathise with her there."

"Not at all; on the contrary, I wish I hadn't made so much of you at first, for now, however often I write, you are not grateful. 'It is good discretion not to make too much of any man at the first; because one cannot hold out that proportion' (Lord Bacon). Look it out when I'm gone."

"Have you really and sincerely considered whether you can take to farming land, and whether you can live in New Zealand?"

"No, D., I haven't; but Giles has, and Giles has talked to me so that it would do you good to hear him."

"You take things too easily. I wonder how you can live on in this half-hearted way."

"Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea' (the immortal Bill)."

"No; but, Valentine, if Giles buys land for you, your destiny will be fixed, and you may find that you are not in your element, though the fishes unquestionably are."

"I tell you, child, that they say nothing could do me so much good as the pure air of that new country, and the being always out of doors in it. And if I stop here, I have nothing. I'm not to study; and I have no capital to buy a partnership, so Giles takes me in hand. He provides capital for the future, and you interest for the present."

"I thought that the study of farming was what you were to interest yourself in for the present."

Valentine smiled. "Dorothea," he presently said, "if you won't go out with me to New Zealand, I'll ask Fanny Wilson. But I forgot to ask whether the cookery scheme answers?"

"I have not tried it, nor do I think I shall."

"Not tried it? I believe it was partly the account you gave of your intentions as to cooking, that made Giles think you would make such a glorious wife for a colonist."

"I am sure he is very obliging! But, Valentine, truly and seriously, I do not wish you to joke any more on such a serious subject."

"I will not, D.; all I wish is that you should allow things to take their course, and not settle beforehand in your own mind that you will never marry me."

He spoke so seriously now that I had no answer ready.

In about two years, as he went on to say, he should be in a position to marry; should have a home to offer, and a brother to back him. I could not, therefore, pass the subject off any longer, or treat his advances, young as he was, either as an impertinence or a joke; and though I absolutely refused to allow him to cherish any hopes, I at last said that I "*would not* settle in my mind beforehand not to like him," but I would let things take their course. At the same time, I told him carefully that I did not think I could ever love him well enough to become his wife.

"Well, but, D. my dear," he said, "supposing that I married somebody else, and Giles and I went to New Zealand, don't you think you should feel rather desolate?"

I confess that this view of the subject struck me forcibly, and for a few minutes I had nothing to reply. I had *no friends*, and only one lover. If he withdrew, what a desolate lot would be mine!

"Well, D. my dear?" he presently said, as if asking for an answer, but no answer was ready. It appeared that Mr. Brandon, so elaborately careful that I should not mistake his own intentions, had no wish to prejudice his brother against me; but I felt that he must be quite as simple a saint as Dick à-Court, if he could think I was in love with him in June, and ready to marry his boy-brother in December, and I was offended at his wishing it.

"Don't you mean to say anything, Dorothea?" continued Valentine, laying his hand on mine with more manliness of feeling than he had yet shown.

"Yes; I wish to say that you are very young at present to make your choice for life, and I wish you to be absolutely free. I must be free also."

"How long must I be free?"

"At the very least, for a year."

"And then you will either accept or decline me?"

"Yes."

"It's extraordinary that I cannot make you believe I care for you."

"That is by no means all I have to consider. I have to make up my mind whether I care enough for you."

He laughed with a sort of exultant joyousness. "I shall not trouble my head about that," he exclaimed. "I am quite content on that head."

"What do you mean, child?" I made answer; and then we had a short contention as to the appropriateness of the epithet, and then as to his having any cause for the contentment he had expressed, and at last he said he had not meant to be rude. "But only look," he went on, "at the letters you write me; sister says they're beautiful."

"Oh, sister sees them, does she?"

"Yes, sometimes."

"Any one else?"

"Well, I let that old hag, Dorinda, see one or two. I thought I had better keep in her good graces, as you are so fond of her."

"You are the most extraordinary boy I ever heard of."

"So St. George says. But don't call me a boy; it really isn't fair."

"Well, *man*, then; but now I wish to say, quite seriously, that I never will write to you again as long as I live if you show my letters to any one whatever."

"I won't, then. I call that a gratifying prohibition."

Before we had time to pursue this conversation any further, Mr. Brandon came in again, looking rather cold after his airing. It was getting dusk; he sat down, and with great composure and gravity began to discourse with me on indifferent topics, just as if he had not been sent out, and as if he did not perfectly well know what we had been talking about.

I answered him with composure; indeed, Valentine's remarkable openness, and my want of any feeling but a sisterly intimacy towards him, made me, in spite of the matter we had discussed, quite devoid of conscious blushes or uncomfortable shyness. But I was aware of an earthquake-like heaving in the spring of the sofa on which we were seated, and which tried my gravity sorely. Valentine's sense of the ridiculous was very keen, and the next remark being addressed to him, he struggled for an instant to answer, and then threw himself back in the corner of the sofa with such shouts and peals of laughter, that the little titter which I tried in vain to repress was no doubt perfectly inaudible.

St. George's delicate endeavours to spare our blushes were quite irresistible to Valentine; it was such an unnecessary piece of refinement on his part, and the result of such a complete misunderstanding of us, that I could have laughed again, if I had not seen a sensitive flush mount up to his forehead: he was absolutely ashamed for Valentine, and he cast a deprecatory glance at me which seemed to bespeak my forbearance for him.

That look recalled me to myself. I could not let St. George think I wanted any pity from him, or would accept from him a mute

apology for the open-hearted fellow who was indulging in this outrageous mirth.

So I did not answer the look at all, but sat demurely by till Valentine had exhausted himself, and sat up again, first looking at his brother and then at me.

It is not agreeable to be laughed at; and St. George, when he became aware that Valentine's mirth was at his expense, started up, pulled down his dark eyebrows with unmistakable signs of anger, and again darted a look at me which I was determined to misunderstand. So I allowed myself to smile, and said to Valentine, "How can you be so rude as to laugh at your brother?"

"I couldn't help it," said Valentine; "and he doesn't care."

Mr. Brandon's countenance, when he found that we were both laughing at him, was worth the study; he really looked unutterable things; but both he and Valentine had admirable tempers, and when the latter said something apologetic, he passed the matter off with a joke, and on reflection laughed himself.

"O Dorothea," said Valentine, quite regardless of his presence, "how nice you look! I did not think you were so pretty. How your eyes shine in the firelight—don't they, Giles?"

"Yes," said the accommodating Giles, without even turning to look at me; but I could see that in his turn he was secretly amused and surprised at our behaviour, and as he sat before the fire in a musing attitude his lips trembled with a little half-smile.

"Now don't be shy, D.," continued Valentine. "I wish you would not shrink yourself in the corner like a discovered fairy fluttering down into a convolvulus bell. Giles, I say, will you look here?"

"Well," said Giles.

"What do you see?"

"I only see Miss Graham."

"And is that all you have to say about it?"

"I have seen her several times before," answered Giles. "I do not remark any very striking change."

Being now goaded to desperation, I exclaimed that if they went on talking of me I should certainly go.

"What does it matter, D. dear?" answered Valentine; "you are so far withdrawn into the shadow that we cannot see your face—only the flickering of the firelight on your hair. What a *stunning* hairdresser Anne Molton is!"

"And what powers of observation *you* have!" said St. George.

"What do you mean, Giles?"

"Merely that there is no change whatever in the dressing of the hair," he persisted.

"I am sure there is; now is there not, Dorothea?"

"I told you I must go, if you would talk in this way."

"Well, I'll leave off if you'll only answer this one question, and not turn away your face so shyly; it's no use, for now I can see the back of your head, and the hair is coiled up exquisitely! What should Giles know about it? He can't bear girls."

"Come," said Mr. Brandon, starting up, "it is time we were off; and the cabman's horse has been waiting till his cough will turn to a consumption."

"I shall not go till she answers."

"I declare you are intolerable. Come, I will not see Miss Graham tormented: come away."

"Well, that is good. Let me alone, Giles. You, indeed, setting up for the champion of the ladies!—you! Am I tormenting you, Dorothea?"

"Not particularly."

"Miss Graham is in a dilemma. She will not answer you because that would be to proclaim *me* in the right; whereas she would rather that *you* were. There now, you know all, and she cannot deny it."

I did not attempt to deny it. He had fathomed my thoughts, and uttered my reason aloud; but my heart was sore against him, for he had deliberately pulled himself down and degraded himself from the pedestal of honour which I had fancied that he ought to occupy. No, it was not right to accept his championship; so I hid my discomfort at Valentine's pertinacity as well as I could, and when he said, "Now, D. dear, pray say something," I replied, that as they were bent on going, I would say "Good night."

"Good night, then," said Mr. Brandon, with careless good humour; "and good-bye, for next week I sail for New Zealand, and I may not have time to call on you again."

I felt a chill come over me, and held out my hand. He just received my fingers for an instant in his, and withdrew them. I shook hands with Valentine, and they went away. I heard their voices in the passage, and I heard Mr. Brandon speak to the cabman, as I still stood in the place where they had left me.

As long as I had been busy, and he absent, I had been able to keep that scene in the wood at bay; now it had drawn near again, and I was ashamed for myself and for him. His grave steady face and the sudden sweetness and feeling of his smile kept me puzzling as to how it could be reconciled with a certain want of feeling which he had betrayed that evening. He had had the air of a good-humoured man, who was rather in an absent mood and felt somewhat bored by the absurdities of his two companions; this was after he had got over his first nervousness.

Buoyant he was by nature and cheerful on principle, but that night he had shown a kind of indulgent partiality towards Valentine that he did not extend to me, whom he scarcely spoke to; and this

had lasted till, having a good deal of business on his hands, he had not patience to let us detain him any longer.

I perceived that it would be very convenient to that family if I would marry Valentine, and get him to betake himself early to a fine climate and a healthy lot. I think that circumstance decided me to take my time! I did not want St. George to have the disposing of me, and to settle everything precisely as he chose.

Though I had a right to the dining-room in the evening, I generally went upstairs and drank tea with Mrs. Bolton, when she chanced to be alone. That evening she and her children were out; so when Anne brought in my tea I asked her to remain with me. She was too well bred to betray any curiosity; but when I remarked that the gentlemen were looking well, she said she had seen Mr. Brandon in the district. "I happened to light on him," she said, "and he sent for a bricklayer, and showed him what was the matter with the copper. Then he talked to the family in No. 4—that set I told you I had hopes of: he told them about Canada; said he would help them to go there if they liked. He's a real gentleman. All the people that saw him were delighted with him."

People who are destined to get the command over others often surprise one by having the last style of manner that one could expect. They are not in the least alike either, as I have had opportunity of judging.

I understood from Anne that the family in question had politely assured him that they would do as he pleased. His behaviour to the women was always characterised by a peculiar air of courteous deference, a sort of homage to their sex, which was evidently natural to him, but which placed them very much at his mercy, because it made them so bashful; but the men he often treated with a lordly air of superiority, much as a master does his school-boys, and it almost always seemed to answer. It was only at Wigfield that he had ever been hissed or made game of, but then that was the neighbourhood in which he had played all the pranks of his boyhood, where, in fact, as his old tenant expressed it, "he had chivied the pigs."

He went into the district the next morning, and, with Anne to help him, found out several little reforms that were wanted, and set them on foot; then he pounced upon two half-starved young needlewomen, and set them to work upon making outfits for themselves, in case, as he informed them, they should wish to go to Canada, which in the end they did wish to do.

In the meantime, Valentine came to me in a very sulky humour, and asked me to give him a lesson in wood-engraving. I inquired what was the matter? and he told me that "Sister" had written to St. George, and said he was not to allow him (Valentine) to be always philandering after me, unless Anne Molton went with us; it was not proper, and she wouldn't allow it. "And he's actually coming here

to-day, and, in fact, rather often," continued Valentine, "because sister says he must! It will be a horrid bore for him, and we sha'n't have half the fun we might have had."

It was a very foggy morning, and I could with difficulty see to go on with my engraving. I felt deeply obliged to "Sister" for having indicated her wishes, and so let me understand what was customary, for I knew very little; but I did not let Valentine see this, and I could not help feeling exceedingly amused when I saw Mr. Brandon coming up the steps looking quite out of countenance, and evidently feeling his ridiculous position, and also that he was anything but welcome.

As long as he was nervous I was quite at my ease, but the fog got so yellow and so thick that I was obliged to leave off my work; and while I was putting the tools away and telling them how rich I should be when I began to earn the two pounds a week that had been promised me, I observed Valentine's spirits fall; he almost groaned. "You can't think," he said, "how miserable it makes me to think that I was the person who induced you to take Anne Molton, and now you spend your life in earning money for her to lay out."

"Yes," I answered, "I am her servant. But how do you know that I shall not be appointed her attendant, her minister, or whatever you like to call it, in the next world? I seem to suit her so well that I often think this will be the case; and if so, it is just as well that I should learn to understand her—that I should prepare."

"You are setting yourself against everything really high in a woman's lot," exclaimed Valentine, as angrily as if he had had a full right to lecture me, and as gravely as if he had been a man of forty. "You are getting so religious that there will soon be no living with you: you are worse than Dorinda."

"Gently, gently," said St. George, but hardly in a tone of remonstrance, rather as if he took Valentine's part.

Valentine heaved up a great sobbing sigh. "Hang it all!" he said under his breath; then he walked to the window, and St. George settled his face into an expression of almost supernatural gravity, as was the way with both that mother's sons when they felt inclined to laugh.

"You're always trying to elevate me," he continued, in a deeply injured tone, and the fog, by one of those sudden changes never seen but in London, grew suddenly transparent, and the great copper-coloured ball, the sun, glinted on his handsome young face. "I don't mind letting you do it, for a consideration," he went on; "but I'm not going to be elevated for nothing."

"You talk of yourself," I replied, "as if you were a mere bubble, and I could blow you up as out of a pipe; why, even if I could, you would soon come down again."

"You write to Dorinda about wishing to lead the higher life," he went on sulkily; "she told St. George that you did."

"But you don't think that I am leading that higher life now, do you, or even a specially religious life?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"I am not, then—not at all; though it is true that I came to London hoping to do so. I am not living in the same world that Anne does, but I am conscious that there is such a world."

"You spend all the time and money you can on the poor," he replied.

"But I could do that with pleasure if there was no God. I like to earn money. I leave the trouble, the fatigue, all the expenditure of feeling, and the weariness of failure to Anne. I cannot raise common work into a religious act; on the contrary, I bring down what might be high work to my own level."

"I don't know what you mean, D.," he answered with irritation.

If his brother had not been present, I should have reminded him that he had no right whatever to make me give an account of myself; but not liking to snub him before his elder, I answered with docility—

"I mean that I cannot make my wood-engraving religious work: it pleases me in itself. I mean also that I absolutely must have some active employment. I am so devoid of friends, so without society, so away from what I love—that I should pine away if I had nothing to do. I mean, further, that if I could get back to the 'Curlew' to-morrow I should be deeply delighted—I should think it quite right to do so."

"Oh," he answered, brightening suddenly, as the day did, his smile and the sunshine beaming out together; "to the 'Curlew,' or to any other place, or any other lot, that you thought was happier than this."

I felt very much disinclined to answer, the lot he meant being so evident; but as he stood before me waiting, I at last brought myself to say, "Yes."

Thereupon he moved nearer to the window and stood gazing out, while the remains of the fog moved bodily westward, before a mild east wind; then, to my surprise, taking out a letter, he said to his brother, "Don't you think I might get the Indian stamp and post this now, the weather looks quite clear?" St. George thought he might, and Valentine, giving him a significant look, went out, presently shut the street-door behind him, and I found to my discomfort that I was going to be left alone with his brother.

But it was light now, so I began to arrange my wood-engraving on the table, which being set in the window, with a low opaque blind in front of it, would enable me to sit with my back to him, and also have the relief of something to do.

It was evident that he was to communicate something to me, but he was in no hurry; he sat absolutely silent for several minutes, then

he said, "Valentine feels hurt because he cannot convince you of his devoted attachment."

Devoted attachment! what ridiculous words to apply to the Oubit's feelings!

"Oh, does he?" I answered; "I am sorry he should be vexed; but perhaps, if I am not convinced——"

"Well, Miss Graham?"

"And perhaps if I cannot feel at present that I ever shall be convinced, it would be very unkind in me to let him make any mistake on that head."

He seemed so nervous again that I became quite at ease; and when he said, in a bungling, awkward way, that he should be very glad to do anything he could in the matter, I was so surprised, considering Valentine's youth and uncertain prospects, that I could not help answering, "But does it not strike you as rather odd that, if he cannot manage his own affairs himself, he should think any one else can manage them for him?"

A long silence followed, but he had seemed to treat the matter so seriously that I was less able than usual to consider it a joke, and at last I said, "And even if at the end of a year or two he did still wish to engage himself to me, which is very doubtful, I have never received the least intimation from his father or Mrs. Henfrey that such a thing would be agreeable to them."

I certainly expected some sort of answer then; even if the old man had never formally said that he approved, I supposed Mr. Brandon would say that no doubt when consulted he would give a willing assent. But no, he said nothing of the sort; he said nothing at all; so I thought I could try to investigate this matter through Valentine—because, if they did not approve, I could retract what I had said about waiting a year, and give him a formal dismissal at once.

When St. George did speak it was to say something flattering as to Valentine's improvement under my influence. "But," he added, with a certain deference and hesitation of manner, "I do not see what object you could have had in talking to him as you did this morning."

"I wish to disavow all unreal things. I do not set myself above Valentine, and I meant him to know it."

"But I consider that aspiration alone takes you quite out of his world: the highest thing he aspires to, is to you."

"I have aspiration, certainly, but I do not know that it is of the right sort. Did you ever hear Tom talk on this very subject,—this which Valentine called 'the higher life'?"

"Yes, I have. Graham has many strange feelings."

"He believes that there is a God," I answered; "he believes that certain men have been, certain still are, privileged to have dealings

with Him—to be conscious of intimations from His Great Spirit. He feels an intense intellectual curiosity about this."

"Yes, he talked with me, and said he knew this matter was rarely believed or considered by those who have no conscious experience of it; he did believe it, and he wondered at the indifference and incredulity of outsiders: he does not confound it with the prickings of conscience, or with that occasional drawing of men's minds in particular directions, which may be called 'the Spirit of God moving' in the thoughts of the nations."

"No; and it is agreed that people cannot reach up to have communication with that divine life only through their minds. They cannot understand those astonishing and difficult things alluded to in some of the Epistles, for instance, only by learning, and from without; but don't you think it natural that those who are not irreligious, only unreligious, should want to search into this matter, and understand as much of it as they can?"

"It is natural for a man so remarkable as your brother; but you cannot be describing yourself, for you have no reservations. You would be willing to be taken into that great life, whatever it might cost you. You are attentive and obedient to what you know of it."

"Yes; but I often feel as Tom does, and no doubt because he put it into my head, that quite apart from devoutness of heart, or reverence, or religion of any sort, there is enough in that subject to give me a keen interest in those who belong to this Kingdom. I like to wait upon Anne on that account."

"Do you think, then, that when David said, 'My soul is athirst for God,' it was not necessarily a religious longing that he felt?"

"No; but yet it seems to me that such a thing is possible."

"Possible that life may be drawn towards its source. Yes; but not that the perception of such drawing should be without a sense that the life which draws is also Light, and that it is pure. Then, if man will let himself be drawn, if he desires to be drawn to this light and this pureness, that is religion."

I saw Valentine coming back again. He had a card in his hand, and while he waited till his knock was answered, he drew my attention to it, then laid his hand on his lips. When he entered, he, however, did not say anything concerning his devoted attachment, but, leaning over my work, put the card before me. On it was written, "Invite us both to tea to-morrow." So, after a few minutes, I did as requested, and told them I drank tea at half-past five.

Valentine arrived the next day at five. I think by that time he had nearly forgotten his annoyance at our not being engaged. He was in high spirits, and said audaciously, "I shall be very hungry, D. dear. Do you mind accepting this little offering?" and he laid on the table a paper parcel, containing three red herrings and a lot of turnip radishes of the very largest size ever seen; I believe

they really were young turnips. I was a good deal surprised when he added that he was always so hungry, and he knew I should have provided nothing but thin bread-and-butter. I knew that he and St. George would dine together at their hotel about eight o'clock, but when Valentine begged me not to tell his brother, "because Giles would think it so odd," I consented, and he seemed to me to be more of a boy and less of a lover than ever.

He then withdrew, and had a long consultation with Anne in the passage, during which I heard his chuckling laugh repeatedly.

"Why did you get those horrid radishes?" I asked, when he returned, for I was sure there was some mischief brewing.

"Only for a relish," he replied. "They were grown in Cornwall, and are not common at this time of the year; but there's no need to tell Giles that. Giles is so shocked at the state of things here—the queer things in this room, the shabby furniture—Here he comes! 'Oh, what a delicious go!' (Dickens.) Yes, here he is."

"Shocked, is he?" I said, as he rang at the bell.

"Of course. What else can you expect from a fellow that employs such a tailor; a fellow that buttons his gloves?"

"I wish you were not so untidy; I wish you would button yours," I said, and I looked round. Two vases, clumsy and made of Derbyshire spar, stood on the chimney-piece, with tall bunches of dried grass in them; in the middle was a little house made of shells, such a house as one buys at seaside places for a half a crown; it had small glass windows. The table was covered with a dark, glossy material, like oilcloth, but not so stiff. The carpet had hardly any pattern left, and one could see the tow it was woven on; the cane-bottomed chairs, though clean, were exceedingly ancient and shabby.

Enter Mr. Brandon, and the repast at his heels. First a tea-tray, with some common crockery on it; more of it seemed to be cracked than was usually the case. The large Britannia-metal teapot that I generally had to use was there in full force, with its black handle. It had a rather battered effect, and a deep dint on one side of it was on this occasion turned towards the company.

But when the stout Staffordshire servant entered again with a smoking hot dish of red herrings and the big turnip radishes, which she set down on the table with a bang, and flanked with a very extensive set of castors, St. George glanced first at her and then at the viands, and seemed for the moment overcome with surprise. Indeed he found it impossible to hide his discomfiture, almost his dismay. Valentine was exceedingly happy; his countenance beamed with joy, as he stuck a steel fork into the biggest of the herrings, and mildly put it on his brother's plate.

"D. dear," he continued, constituting himself master of the ceremonies, "will you take any—any fish? No? Well, if you are not

hungry, it was the more considerate of you to make these kind yet simple preparations." He then sat down beaming, and began to dispatch his herring, while St. George, after a momentary hesitation, went at his like a man, being for once quite taken in by the Oubit, and possibly thinking that his "devoted attachment" made him regard the repast as delicious.

I then lifted the big teapot, and helped them both to tea, when Valentine, having dispatched his herring, helped himself largely to radishes, and began to crunch them audibly.

"I always knew," he said quietly, "that the faithful were very fond of fish, particularly salt fish; but, Dorothea, I hope you do not deny yourself fresh meat altogether?"

"Of course not," I exclaimed.

St. George looked aghast.

"Dorinda does not," continued Valentine. "Now, then," he added, with a look of admonition at his brother, "you'll take some radishes, of course." But here St. George struck work, trying hard, however, to appear as if he took the whole thing as a matter of course. On this the "graceless youth," going a little too far, remarked, with a pious air, that this simple style of living was far more consistent with my opinions than the usual dinners at Wigfield; "and I only wish," he audaciously went on, "that every poor person in this great metropolis had enjoyed this day an equally abundant and wholesome meal." Whereupon St. George, rousing up suddenly to the consciousness of some mischief or other, and not sure, perhaps, whether one or both of us were making game of him, began to inquire concerning the Novel, and punished us by giving us such a succession of ludicrous scenes for it, that we both laughed till we were quite faint.

The next morning Miss Tott appeared, and sweetly and tenderly proposed to take me to the Crystal Palace. Valentine soon came in, and did not deny that Giles had arranged the matter. "He could not take us himself," said Valentine, chuckling; "he says it is too much to expect of him; it would make him feel such a muff; besides, he hasn't time."

Miss Tott bore us off: how happy she was, how sweetly she sympathized with our supposed feelings! Kind creature! I was terribly ashamed of Valentine that day, for, after we had been some time in the Palace, looking about us below, we went up into a gallery, where there were various stalls heaped with articles for sale. Some were set forth as bankrupt stock, some as having been saved from a fire, and all had sensational labels on them: "Observe the price"—"Dreadful sacrifice"—"Must be cleared out this day"—"Given away for four and 9½," &c., &c.

I saw Valentine buying something of the smart young saleswomen; but it was a "people's day," and there was a crowd, so

Miss Tott and I moved on; but, after a time, I thought that somehow we seemed always to be taking a knot of people after us, and it was not till we had got downstairs again, and were among the tropical plants, that I saw, to my dismay, as Miss Tott left Valentine's arm, and sailed mildly on in front, a good-sized placard, which was pinned on her back, and bore this inscription: "No reasonable offer refused." I darted forward; it was some minutes before I could get the placard off without attracting her attention, but I managed to do this at last, and to hide it.

Valentine was perfectly grave, and I tried to get away, but the people about us still insisted on being amused. I observed that some, when they passed, turned round to laugh, and others moved on behind us and noticed our behaviour.

In the meantime I did not dare to snub Valentine, because Miss Tott was so close to us; I could not even have the pleasure of telling him that this was a stale joke, and I had heard of its being perpetrated before. However, he very soon received a snubbing that none of us at all expected, and Miss Tott never understood more of it than she saw before her eyes.

A respectable elderly man, in a coachman's livery, came up, and accosted him with great civility:

"Excuse me, sir, but young ladies didn't ought to be made conspicuous in public places."

The Oubit had nothing to say for himself.

"I've been following you some time," continued this specimen of nature's gentlemen, "to let you know, sir, that when the girl you bought that placard of saw what you were doing with it, she snatched up another and pinned it on your own coat-tails; and there it is now, sir. Good morning."

There it was sure enough, and we unpinned it, amid the laughter of the bystanders, some people, looking down from the gallery, greeting Valentine at the same time with an ironical cheer—

"This handsome article, very little damaged, going for three and sixpence. Worth double the money."

After this I declined to take any more excursions with Valentine; but he came daily to see me, and was very full of fun, evidently feeling also that ease about his future prospects that one often sees in the younger and favourite members of a large family.

To Giles his welfare was evidently an object of the deepest solicitude. Why these two brothers concentrated so much of their affection on each other, nearly to the exclusion of some who were equally related to them, I did not understand; but I had long seen it plainly. Liz and Lou were nothing to Giles, and sister was nothing to Valentine, in comparison with the feeling of each for his brother.

They had set their hearts, as I found from Valentine, on always living near each other, Giles had consented to expatriate himself

for Valentine's sake ; he had enough to live on anywhere, but Valentine was without patrimony, and, as he easily made me perceive, there could be no opening so favourable for him as to have land to cultivate, and sheep to feed, with his brother at hand to advise and help him.

I did not believe that I could ever accept Valentine, and I told him so almost every day ; but he was quite imperturbable, made the best of it, and generally replied, with great composure, that time would show. At the same time he did not fail to point out to me how *tiresome* it would be, and how completely it would put out both him and Giles, if I failed them at the last minute.

"How can that be?" I once asked.

Why, Giles meant to take him out, and settle him first, with his wife, and then come home and get a wife for himself.

"Dear me ! you seem to have made a great many arrangements."

"Yes ; and you see how little fun there would be in marrying a girl whom I did not thoroughly know, and who would be ill, perhaps, at sea through half the voyage, and be frightened. I should be so dull, too, when I was left there with her, and Giles was gone. We should have no recollections in common. Besides, I love you, I tell you ! Don't I say so every day ?"

"Yes. Well, I hardly know which of you is the oddest of the two ! And so your brother wants me to agree to all this ?"

"Yes, he told me to lay it well before you, that we might be sure you understood about my having nothing here ; and he said I should be a lucky fellow if I secured you."

"And he expects that you will ?"

"Well," said Valentine, "if you come to that, why shouldn't I ?"

Here, of course, we both laughed.

"You see, D.," he continued, "there are two reasons why it's almost sure to come right : I want you, and nobody else does."

This was quite true ; but it did not diminish the oddness of the whole thing. St. George seemed instinctively to feel that the Oubit wanted elevating, wanted deeper feeling, wanted tenacity of purpose, and he thought he must get these from me, and from marriage and manly cares. From many things that Valentine said, I observed that Giles thought he was sure to put his neck under the yoke of matrimony as soon as he possibly could ; he, therefore, wished him to do it wisely, attach himself to a prudent person, who would amuse him first, and guide him afterwards.

Of course, I did not like this idea : I could not help feeling a pang at the notion of his making a convenience of me. There was still a great deal about him that I found attractive ; I could have been docile to almost any wish of his but this, that I should learn to love a man whom I was to govern. I could not bear him to treat me with courtesy or deference, because I considered that he could have no

real feeling of what was due to womanhood. I liked Valentine's open raillery and boyish brusquerie far better, and though Valentine and I constantly sparred and argued when we were alone together, I treated him with consideration on those rare occasions when his brother was present, not only because he was more civil then, but because I felt it to be his due.

But I liked Giles so much that I could not bear to be obliged to disapprove of him. He had a smile that was worth watching for, it was so sunny and tender, such a strange contrast to the grave cast of his features, the steady manliness of his demeanour, and the somewhat "masterful" way in which he worked and ruled; but this same smile was quite consistent with utter ignoring of other people's feelings. I had come across his path, stood near to him for a moment, and when he found it out, he had pushed me somewhat roughly away. Still he meant to be both just and kind; there was even something elaborate in the way in which he set forth the Oubit's good qualities, and he evidently spoke highly of me to him.

When some affections which we would almost give our lives to keep warm and fresh grow cold in spite of cherishing, what a perversity of nature it seems that others can thrive, and live, and even grow, when they have nothing to feed upon, and every reason to fade and die!

I had never loved Tom so much as during that strange summer and autumn. He never took any notice of me, but I knew very well that he often thought of me. As for St. George, I was almost sure that, besides taking Tom away from me, he had got a hold on him, and attracted his regard for himself. I felt that his influence on the whole must be exercised with the best intentions, and the power that I knew he had over this much-loved brother made him more important to me. And now there was the Oubit—very young certainly, but remarkably handsome, frank almost to a fault, absolutely, as he always told me, devoted to me, and desiring nothing so much as to spend his life with me. I liked him very much, but I could not become enthusiastic about him: my affection for him did not grow, and I was ashamed to feel sometimes that he almost bored me.

Well, but the visit came to an end suddenly, and I straightway missed his pleasant company. Mr. Mortimer had a stroke of illness; the brothers were summoned home. St. George gave up his contemplated voyage, and he and Valentine both hurried to the old man's side.

I often look back on the year which followed, just as I do to the years passed at school, without dwelling on particular days, but as one uneventful march of slow development. Anne Molton was a great comfort to me, and I was just the mistress to make her happy. She and I became fast friends, in the truest sense of the word. She could not earn money, and I did not know how to spend it. I never attained to the art of doing anything for the poor with my own hands.

I could not influence the men ; and the women in most cases did not like me to enter their rooms unless they had had notice of the visit, and everything was in decent order. In the February of that year my uncle wrote his second letter, and sent me ten pounds. The wonderful things that Anne Molton did with that ten pounds surprise me even to this day.

Anne had an immense opinion of my cleverness in the wood-engraving line, and had confided to Mr. Brandon her belief that I should soon have large sums to spend in the district. He had accordingly suggested one or two things which he thought it would be desirable to do, and as soon as this money came she told me of them.

One of these was to rent the lower room or cellar of each house in my district, and in which there were often two families, and turn it into a larder for the house. The people, having no description of closet nor any place to keep food in, were always in the habit of buying it for each meal, even to the morsel of sugar and tea. Of course they paid the dearer for this, and it also compelled them to shop on Sunday, for not a morsel of meat or drop of milk would keep through the night in their crowded rooms. Accordingly I rented the lower room of one house to see how it would answer. I paid two shillings and sixpence a week for it, and caused eight little closets to be made in it with wooden frames and canvas panels ; they nearly filled the small place, and each had a lock and key. We then took out what glass there was in the window, and put a few light iron bars instead.

We calculated that at the lowest computation the families would save tenpence a week each by these safes. They cost twelve shillings apiece, and that money I sunk ; but I let them out at one penny a week to the people in the house, so that my weekly outlay for rent was very small. But the plan answered so well, that the families in the next house petitioned me to do the same for them ; and as they promised to take Anne's advice as to the spending of their money, I ventured to do it. She taught many of them to make their own bread once a week and keep it in their safe, and to lay in enough tea and sugar for the week when the week's money came. I heard of but a single case of pilfering, and the plan was such a comfort that I never ceased to delight in it.

We went on very gradually. I made the third set of cupboards in March, and was now burdened with rent ; but then I began to earn money by engraving, and as I had still my five shillings a week earned by my little pupils, I did not mind that, and there never was any difficulty about letting the cupboards.

One day, just after the third house was furnished with its larder, our friend the vicar came in to see me. "Miss Graham," said he, "do you know that this maid of yours is doing a great work ? Why, she is reclaiming the people in her court from their barbarity ; but

now, mark me, this thing will get wind if you don't mind, and then the world will come to look, and good-bye to your usefulness."

I was rather alarmed at the notion of people coming to look on.

"Keep it snug, keep it snug," he repeated. "Don't for your life have any conferences, and don't let her mention it at the district meeting. It's all stuff about thinking it your duty to proclaim the good she has been privileged to do, that others may do likewise. Talk and publicity are the ruin of this city. I hope nobody will flatter that woman and spoil her."

Happily the thing did *not* "get wind," and more happily still I earned before midsummer ten pounds more by my engraving, and we put larders into the other three houses.

At midsummer I gave up my little pupils, and took to wood-engraving altogether. But I was now much more free. I had done with drawing and engraving lessons, and, without spending more than four hours a day at my art, I could earn one pound ten a week, and sometimes more. As I could live on my income, I did not scruple to devote this money to Anne, and she soon "annexed" another court. We got the houses whitewashed from garret to cellar, and introduced the second of Mr. Brandon's plans. This was a hiring-room. We laid in a stock of pancheons, pots, kettles, smoothing-irons, baskets, brooms, gowns, cloaks and bonnets, coats, blankets, sheets, mattresses, Bibles, Prayer-books, bottles, boxes, etc., etc., and Anne opened it for hiring every day for an hour.

Suppose a woman wanted to make bread, she came and hired a pancheon, cost price tenpence; she paid a penny for the use of it, and when she had hired ten times it became her own property. But perhaps in the meantime it had been lent out ten or twelve times to other women, and yet was manifestly none the worse; therefore we made the pancheon pay for the broom and scrubbing-brush, which were perishable, and which accordingly we gave tenpence for, and sold for fourpence. Thus a woman got a scrubbing-brush when she had hired it four times, and was accommodated with other articles in the same proportion.

The plan cost us very little more than the rent of the room, always excepting Anne's time and keep. The clothing, especially the bonnets, I introduced because the usual excuse, and a true one, for never entering a place of worship was that they had no decent clothes to go in. I let one bonnet, gown, and cloak at three halfpence a time for the set, and thus ten sets of clothing enabled thirty women to go to church once each on Sunday, and very soon we sold them at half-price. They could always produce the money, and I had as many candidates as I could supply. Anne and I made the bonnets. We did not attempt to give them a dowdy air, or the least look of work-house simplicity, but covered the shapes with dark silk, and put in

the caps a few bright flowers such as the more decent classes of poor women wear.

I do not speak here of the ordinary London poor who have people to look after them, and as a rule send their children to school, can read and write themselves, and are of such a class as no one is afraid to visit. Our district, especially the part that Anne "annexed" and set up the hiring-room in, was quite below that. The people, as a rule, had no clothes but what they walked about in; the children were under scarcely any control, and though most of them had picked up the accomplishments of reading and writing at ragged schools, any moral teaching that had been given them had glanced off and been lost in the uncongenial atmosphere of home.

At midsummer I began to feel that Anne was a grand person to have and to keep. I hoped no society would get her away from me. I could earn, with no more time spent on work than served to keep me employed and happy, about one pound ten a week; and I let her have it all. She never began by preaching to people about their faults or even their crimes. She took for granted that they knew they were sinners. What she insisted on with them was that they were miserable, and that God had provided both an earthly and a heavenly remedy.

Some people came to her sometimes who wished her to feel that she ought not to try to prepare the poor to move out of the country, but rather to provide for their being comfortable and happy where they were. I think this notion disturbed Anne at first, for she was taking great pains by means of pictures and evening readings of interesting tales to prepare some of her families to move to Canada. If it was the will of Providence that England should be so full of people, was it flying in the face of Providence to want to redistribute them?

Anne went to Wigfield about this time for a few days' rest, and to see her friends. Then meeting Mr. Brandon, she told him her trouble, and he showed her a map of England. "If the Isle of Wight was crammed with people," he said, "and England almost empty, should you think it wrong in that case to bring over as many as you could?"

"Well, no, sir; but then it is so near. But, sir, I'm told that capital will always attract labour, and England, therefore, must be crowded. They say emigration is only a remedy for a time."

"But that time is our time."

"Only they say that sending folks off does not really get at the root of the matter."

"Excepting in the case of those who go. And don't you think they are worth considering?"

I went to stay with Miss Tott while Anne was at Wigfield. This was before Valentine's year of *freedom* had expired; and now his father was so much better that Giles went to Canada. The Oubit's

letters then began to get really interesting, and more manly; he was learning farming of a practical farmer very near his home. He seemed to like it, and seemed also to feel the responsibility of being left to take care of his father's affairs, and in some sort to be in the place that his brother was accustomed to occupy.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Herken this conseil for thy sickness :
Upon thy gladé day have in thy minde
The unaware woe of harm that com'th behind."

Chaucer.

THE year came to an end. Valentine had not failed to remind me of it, and had written more than once of his hope that he should come up to London and have my answer in person. But he did not come, and he did not write.

I was surprised; but on the fifth day after the time when I had thought to be asked for my decisive answer, I saw the announcement of Mr. Mortimer's death in the *Times*.

Valentine, the last time he had written, had mentioned that his father was ailing. Dear, beautiful, good old man! he had spent a happy life, and he died a most peaceful death.

When I wrote to condole with Valentine, I did not ask any questions as to the future plans of the family; but he told me of his own accord all that I cared to know.

Giles, he said, had left written instructions with him that, under all circumstances, the house and establishment were to be kept up till his return: everything was to go on as usual. He also told me, with his own beautiful frankness, that one of the last things his father had said to him had, in a certain way, concerned me. The old man had told him that he was still very young to engage himself in marriage, and he wished he would yet wait a few months longer.

He conveyed to me the impression that Mr. Mortimer had not left much property behind him; and in a succeeding letter he told me plainly that his father, less prudent for himself than for his step-son, had got involved in some mining speculations, and that when the debts were paid it was thought there would be nothing left for his children.

Mrs. Henfrey had a handsome jointure. He would have nothing; and Liz and Lou would be dependant on Giles, though the latter, with her little portion of a thousand pounds, was to be married to Captain Walker as soon as Giles returned.

Valentine was an affectionate fellow; but I observed that he spoke

of his brother as likely to feel Mr. Mortimer's death more than any of them ; and I thought this probable, for the old man was very fond and very proud of him ; he loved him with the peculiar partiality of amiable old age.

Anne and I went for a few weeks to Hastings during the spring that followed. I had hoped that my uncle would take me on board the "Curlew" that year, but no invitation came, and shortly after our return I was made aware of the reason.

"Madam," said Mrs. Brand, writing to me for the first time, "Master sends *his respects* to you, and I was to tell you that Mr. Graham has married that young woman after all. Master is, so to speak, heart-broken about it, and doesn't seem to enjoy his meals nor his pipe at all. Dear ma'am, don't take on more than you can help ; she was always an impudent hussy, and we knew it must come to this at last. But master had made himself quite a slave to Mr. Graham, to keep it off as long as he could.

"Master says he shouldn't have minded her being a barmaid, no more than nothing at all, if she could have brought him a good character ; and he would have taken her on board, and made the best of her ; for, said he to me, 'If a young man that has not led a good life is willing to marry, that is a bad fellow who would prevent him, let the girl be who she will.' But bless you, ma'am, he cannot demean himself to notice Mrs. Tom Graham.

"The master cannot seem to settle at all without Mr. Graham, so he never says a word about the marriage to him ; and when he chooses to come on board and cruise about a bit, he does ; but he has taken a small house at Southampton for his wife.

"Mr. Graham has often mentioned you to me, ma'am, lately, and last Tuesday week he said to me, 'If you ever write to my sister, Mrs. Brand, send my love to her.'

"So no more at present, from your humble servant,

"MERCY BRAND."

It is remarkable on what very slight hints, and even on what unexpected silences, a strong impression can be formed ! I knew that this had been long impending ; but how I had become possessed of the knowledge, even before going to Wigfield, I cannot say. I had been determined not to acknowledge it even to myself, for it seemed to have no ground to stand upon, and certainly I had nothing to quote for it. I might be wrong, and, therefore, silence was my best course with regard to it.

For this trouble I could find no remedy but patience—and work. My heart went into mourning for this one brother of mine. It seemed so certain that he would deteriorate under such influence, and, as he would not write, he was already lost to me.

Some months before I first came on board the "Curlew," he had

first met with the woman who was to cast her dark shadow over his future life. He was weak and could not resist, and yet he was obstinate and would not give others a chance of saving him by keeping him out of her way.

I felt Tom's utter loss very keenly, but I struggled against sorrow as well as I could, and I had Valentine's letters to help me, for Valentine was improving fast, and now, as was his due, my heart began to turn to him with affectionate dependence; he had made himself important to me; he was taking pains to fit himself for the important duties of life, and he let me take to myself the comfort of thinking that I was doing him good, that the motives I set before him were not without their effect, and that, under my influence, he was growing more manly, more steady, and more serious.

This was a pleasure, no doubt, but not exactly the kind of pleasure I should have chosen. I wanted to look up, not down; I would gladly have obeyed a master, but I was not to have a master—I was to prepare for myself a faithful and affectionate companion, whom was to be my province to improve.

I knew this was what I could have, and I often reflected whether it was not better to take the kind heart that was ready for me, than to stay behind without a friend in this hemisphere, and placed in such a position that it was scarcely possible for me to make friends.

St. George did not reach England till the June after Mr. Mortimer's death, and I no sooner saw him and Valentine together than I became aware how much dearer Valentine was than he, how coolly I could now look on the bad taste he had betrayed in his conduct to me, and how secure I could now feel in the easy frankness, the growing affection, and the steady improvement of the Oubit.

I still admired St. George's unselfishness, his benevolence, and high-minded generosity; but I began to feel that he was not suited for the gentle companionship of daily life. He loved and cared for Valentine with an absorbing affection that he did not now attempt to conceal from me: he seemed to have transferred to him all the regard that he had hitherto bestowed on his father, but he took very little notice of me, and, if I had not been expressly assured by Valentine that he was very anxious for our marriage, I should have supposed that he disliked the notion of it, for he only came to see me twice, though the two brothers stayed in London a fortnight.

I enjoyed that fortnight. I was fast reconciling myself to the notion of spending my life with Valentine, and I liked to listen to his plans, in which, of course, I was always supposed to play a conspicuous part.

Giles had bought a fine tract of land, with one house on it; they were to build another, and each brother was to occupy one.

It was such a fine climate—neither too hot, nor too cold—such streams for fishing, and a fine sea-board and soil—such timber, such

shells to be picked up, such ferns to be gathered, that gradually, as I listened to the enthusiastic voice (which, by-the-bye, was no longer cracked), I began to grow enthusiastic in my turn, and consider how delightful it would be to begin a new life in a new country—a useful, free, active life, with at least one person to whose happiness I should be of consequence and among others whom I had worked for and helped to reclaim from barbarism.

So Valentine and Giles went away again—the latter having set plans on foot, in the courts and alleys where Anne visited, which were to result in the sending out of about forty people—men, women, and children. How hard he worked!—vigorous hand and comprehensive brain both brought to bear on the plans he was maturing. He came to see me, as I said, twice—the first time he stayed only a few minutes; the second time he stayed two hours, and spent them in giving me instructions and advice, that I might be able to go on with what he had begun.

"It is most desirable," he observed, "that these very people should be settled about our land, for they have a perfect enthusiasm for you, and would do anything in the world to serve and please you."

"No wonder!" exclaimed Valentine, coming up and sparring at him with clenched fists; "hasn't she devoted her whole time to them, except the few hours spent in scribbling to me? Oh, why was I thrown among such excellent people! Giles, you villain, you've sailed all over the world on purpose to make me feel small; you and Dorothea have been the ruin of me; I'm crushed beneath the weight of your excellences! Sir, you have much to answer for! If it wasn't for the presence of a lady, I would knock you down. What business, indeed, have you to be so much better than your neighbours?"

"Come, none of this!" said Giles, starting up and laughing; "if you want to knock me down, set to work and have done with it; show your prowess in this presence, which ought to inspirit you."

"On second thoughts, Dorothea," said Valentine, turning to me, "on second thoughts—though I could easily do it, mind you!—I shall forbear. 'Birds in their little nests agree, and 'tis a shocking sight,' &c. No, Giles, this once I won't do it. It's a weak point of his, D. dear, to think he's strong. You may sit down again, Giles; your brother has forgiven you. Speak to him, Dorothea."

"Sit down, Mr. Brandon, Valentine will excuse you this once for being his superior, and you cannot very well throw him out of this window, because there is an area outside."

Mr. Brandon, however, did not sit down again; he had laughed; but when we began to talk together, he went to the window, and stood gravely looking out, as if lost in thought. In that attitude he continued till Valentine said he was ready to go, and he then turned

and shook hands with me, and sighed. He looked gloomy enough then, perhaps a little irate also, for Valentine had kept him waiting some time, and it was scarcely possible that they could reach their train.

They set off. I knew it would be two months before I should see Valentine again ; but I was easy on this point—he never gave me the least cause to be otherwise. Early in August, Mrs. Henfrey, Liz, and Valentine were going to the sea-side ; Anne and I were to visit the same place, and there I was to give Valentine my final answer.

The time passed not unpleasantly. I earned a good deal of money for the outfits of my people ; but I never improved in wood-engraving beyond a certain point : I attained great facility and quickness, but was conscious myself that I should never excel. I had illustrated several little books of small importance, and never was in want of work ; therefore I did not care particularly to find that I was not to advance any further ; for if I did go to New Zealand, I should not exercise the art there, and in the meantime I could earn two guineas a week, and spend it on my emigrants.

Mr. Brandon came up again to London in July ; I never saw him, excepting in the district, whither I now sometimes went with Anne. It was a great undertaking to ship off so many people, and the weather was intensely hot, which added to his fatigue. My chief business was with the clothing required, and I often sat up till three o'clock in the morning, working through the summer nights, with the windows open to admit the night air, which was fresh and wholesome, compared with what we had to breathe in the day.

Always cheerful, always kind to the people, reassuring the women, instructing the men, I heard of Mr. Brandon day by day, though I did not see him ; and I heard from Valentine, sometimes every week, sometimes oftener.

One day he sent me a little hamper of plants by the railway. I unpacked them myself, as Anne was out, and set them one by one on my table. Afterwards I noticed that the pots were wrapped in paper that had been written upon. Old exercises I thought the writing looked like : it was clear and round, and very distinct. The flowers were more attractive than these papers, and I do not think my eye was drawn to the writing again for two days, when, as I sat quietly engraving, these words were clearly seen : "Tell you what I have been about, my lad ? Don't flatter yourself ; I shall do no such thing. 'A man who cannot mind his own business is not to be trusted with the king's.' Besides you might treat my letters as you do Miss——" Here a hiatus.

How queer of Valentine, I thought, to use old letters to wrap his pots in ! And I felt rather pained to think that perhaps he laid my letters about in the same way.

I took off this bit of paper, destroyed it, glanced at another pot,

and these solemn words met my eyes: "It is not possible truly to believe that He gave life and yet not to love the Giver; it is not possible to human nature to love without trying to please the object of the love. And how can you talk with contempt of small beginnings and worthless attempts? If God does not despise 'the day of small things,' you must not despise it either."

It made the blood rush to my face to think that Anne, and the servants, and Mrs. Bolton, and her pupils, might all probably have read this letter. I began to suspect who alone could have written thus to Valentine, and when I turned the pot to the other side the writing was too fatally clear for a single word to be mistaken. "I have paid your bills, and, you young scapegrace, don't leave this about, for I should feel humiliated if any living soul saw that I demeaned myself to the pitch of caring so much about you. Why can't you burn your letters instead of throwing them about the floors, and wiping your razors on them?"

That was all; the paper was torn away, and I saw no signature. But Valentine had also sent me some seeds of mignonette; they, as I remembered, were twisted in written paper, in the same clear hand. I took them, turned them upside down, that I might not read the writing, and proceeded to empty them into a glass; but fate was too cunning for me. The name was signed cornerwise, where I could not fail to see it: "Your loving brother, G. B."

I felt exceedingly vexed. This, then, was a letter addressed to Valentine by Giles, and containing a particular request, which he had not attended to. It alluded to a habit of his which made me blush, and wonder what he did with my letters. Was he likely to correspond with any other *Miss* beside myself? I thought not; then, in all probability, the letters that Giles had picked up were my letters.

I did not like to question Valentine about this, but it had a sensible effect on my mind. I wrote more cautiously, and I believe that till August came, and my people were shipped off, and Anne and I, both looking very pale after long residence in London, had reached the pretty little bay where we were to spend our holidays, I had never forgotten the ill-omened piece of paper for an hour.

A pretty little cottage had been taken for us by Mrs. Henfrey. It was near their own lodgings, and was covered with china roses and passion flower. Valentine met us at the railway, and showed such simple and natural delight that I was touched. Who was I, indeed, that he should care so long for one who had given so little in return?

When I had changed my dress he took me to his sister, and I drank tea with her and Liz, Valentine being in such high spirits, and so openly complimentary, that I saw he was in no doubt as to my accepting him.

He was, indeed, a fine fellow ; his cough had left him, and though he stooped a little, he betrayed no other sign of weak health. He had all his father's beauty of feature ; the brown whiskers that he had prophesied of were come. And as he sat opposite to me in his sea-side costume, I could not help looking at him and admiring him.

"Valentine looks well, my dear," observed Mrs. Henfrey.

"And is well," said Liz.

"Good action," Valentine added, "warranted to go quietly in harness, no vice—rising twenty-two next grass."

Mrs. Henfrey laughed, and made some remark about his going in harness.

"Why, yes," said Valentine, "the sooner I make up my mind to it the better. Look at Walker, Lou takes away all his money, and only allows him a shilling a day for his little pleasures."

"Excepting what he spends in turnpikes," observed Mrs. Henfrey ; "she pays that."

"If I were Captain Walker," I remarked, "I should not allow that. I should choose to be master in my own house."

"Hear her !" cried Valentine. "Well, if I ever have a wife," he continued, with affected modesty and confusion, "as there is nothing I desire so much as to please you, I shall endeavour to be master in my own house."

It was a glorious evening, and the quiet sea was sending up crisp little wavelets among the roundest of pebbles and the cleanest of sand. Valentine took me out for a walk, and I felt all the extasy that the clear sky, and wooded cliffs, and sunny sea can impart, when one has long been pent up in a city, working hard and thinking much.

Those were very pleasant days. We rambled about, pleased with each other, but not talking in lover-like fashion. I always instinctively checked such talk, and he followed my lead. At last, when we had been together a week, he one day said, as we were walking home with baskets full of shells and seaweed, "Well, D. dearest, have you made up your mind ?"

"About what ?" I asked.

"Why, whether you'll have me. I've waited very patiently."

"So you have."

"And Giles says we really ought to sail next Christmas. Come, say yes, and have done with it."

"Very well ; I do say yes."

"You do !" he exclaimed, throwing up his cap and catching it again ; "then I say hurra !"

We walked together in silence for half a mile, and then he said,—

"Why have you hesitated so long, dear ?"

"Because I did not think we cared enough for each other."

"And you think so still ?"

"Yes; but the time is so near that now it does not so much signify."

"Very true," he answered, as quietly as possible; "it's not likely, you know, that in such a little while I should see any one I like better. And if I don't love you enough, it's certain that I love you better than anybody else."

I think that was all that passed between me and this amiable, sweet-tempered fellow. I felt that what he had said of himself was also true of me. And I began to see that when we were once married we had every likelihood of happiness. I should care ten times more for him when I had made it my duty and the occupation of my life to do so. And he would have few people to compare with me out in New Zealand. I should be useful and even necessary to him, and I fully believed that he would never regret the wife he had chosen.

So we walked home quietly together. He showed that he was in good spirits by singing a little now and then; but he did not kiss me, or even take my hand. When I came in Mrs. Henfrey asked me to dine with her, and I agreed, and went up stairs to take off my bonnet. In the meantime Valentine had told his sisters what had passed, and when I came down they both kissed and congratulated me.

And so this matter was settled. I certainly had expected it to be accomplished with more dignity; but when the question was asked I was ready with my answer. I had taken plenty of time to consider, and at last had made up my mind, not that I greatly loved Valentine, but that I could not give up the only being who greatly loved me.

After this I was very cheerful and contented. Every day seemed to justify me to myself, for Valentine was in delightful spirits, pleased with me and everything I did; and never so happy as when we were rambling about together, or sitting talking under the deep shadows of the crags.

There was one morning that made, as I supposed at the time, no especial impression on me. I had on a hat and feather, his first present to me for my personal adornment, excepting the ring. We sat together in a little cove, sorting some shells that we had collected, as we had frequently done before, and a little vessel sailed across the blue water, rocking prettily and gleaming white in the sunshine. The tide had gone out and laid bare the rocks covered with seaweed, and we saw a man stepping lightly among them, and sometimes standing still and gazing out to sea.

"Whoever that fellow is," said Valentine, "he's not as happy as I am."

I do not very often dream, but what I have dreamed once I dream again. Many times since have I dreamt of that scene: the overhanging crags, the delicate little heaps of shells, the fluttering of

the feathers in my hat, and the solitary figure, concerning which Valentine was pleased to remark, "he is not as happy as I am."

We had passed a pleasant week since our engagement. Sometimes we read together, and sometimes we practised. Valentine's voice was, as I have said before, no longer cracked; but it was not at all a good one,—it was poor, thin, and of small compass, yet it was his great ambition to sing. And I spent many an hour practising his songs with him, and artfully accompanying them, humouring him in the tune and covering his defects as well as I could.

"Well," said Valentine, rising reluctantly, "I suppose I ought to go and meet old Giles at the station."

I had known that Giles was coming that morning, but it had slipped out of my mind, and I now said that if he would not be away more than an hour I would sit there and wait for him. The little station was just a quarter of a mile off; he had only to climb the winding path in the cliff, and cross a strip of wild heath, and there it was.

I sat there alone and thanked God for my present happiness. The recreation and pleasure of the country and the sea were very great; the comfort of the defined future was also great; and though I felt none of the jealousies, the absorbing interest, nor the restless excitement that I had heard ascribed to lovers, I was happy, and knew that I was likely to be more so.

A man who began so gradually and reasonably to care for, and deliberately preferred, without idolizing me, was likely, as I now began to feel, to preserve his liking when I had shown him that I deserved it by returning it. There was no over-estimation to begin with, and sink to its natural level; there was no enthusiasm to cool, and nothing to be found out. We were both thoroughly well acquainted with one another, and now that I liked him well, I began to see that we were better suited to each other than most people. Only, I said to myself, if I might have had a master! But I checked that thought, it was so mean; and I confess that the notion of being the ruling spirit was not distasteful, if only it could be concealed from others! To have my own way, and yet to have other people think that my husband ruled, would, I thought, be not disagreeable, and I resolved that it should be so. I had already been able to make Valentine take my views of certain little matters and act upon them, thinking they were his own. I resolved to do it again.

Sitting quite alone in the clear heat of that exquisite August day, I let my heart sun itself with the beauty around. That nimble and delicious air seemed to pervade me, and make me more buoyant and joyous. My thoughts and the pictures that imagination was painting for me of my future, mustered colour and freshness from the vivid colouring about me. The murmuring noise of London being hushed,

I could hear the exquisite tinkling of the water that only just curled its clear brink as it broke on the pebbles. And this water was making the very music I was to live near out in New Zealand. I listened, and it seemed to prophesy a pleasant something. The water only gave the music, but I set words to it, and the music and the words together were delightful to my heart. The water turned out to be a true prophet. I did not. The words I had sung to it were not half good enough, and were all wrong from beginning to end.

Voices close at hand—Valentine's and another. Before I had time to change my attitude they turned the corner of the cliffs and entered the tiny cove.

"Here he is," said Valentine, and Giles, lifting his hat, stooped to give me his hand as I sat, and smiled affectionately.

They sat down, Valentine beside me, Giles in front of us. I was conscious directly of a great change for the better in the manner of the latter. He was now quite friendly to me, and having come down to make holiday, he had left business behind him, and forgotten for the time his coppers and baths, his lectures, emigrants, and schools, and was enjoying the scene about him with tranquil contentment.

So I thought; and when Valentine told me that he was the man whom he had seen walking among the rocks, I remarked "Then you were mistaken about 'that man'."

"I had no sooner climbed the cliff," continued Valentine, "than he recognised me and waved his wideawake."

"What did Valentine say about 'that man'?" asked Giles.

Valentine told him: he listened with quiet attention. Perhaps our circumstances, and this tacit confession of Valentine's pride in them, touched and pleased him; certain it is that he looked at us both with a smile most sweet and sunny, as one might well do who knew that he had made two young people happy, and shaped their pleasant prospects for them, and smoothed their way.

"And why did you say he was mistaken?" he asked, addressing me.

His eyes and his whole face were full of such a much higher kind of happiness than Valentine had exulted in, that I felt I had spoken suddenly, and now would have given something to have been silent.

"You must have been very uncommonly jolly indeed, old Giles," said Valentine, "if you were then as jolly as I was—besides, you were alone."

"My dear boy, I don't at all doubt that you are as happy as you know how to be,—perfectly brimful of happiness."

"And not as happy as you would be if you were engaged and in my circumstances?"

"No."

"Nor as happy as I am now?"

"That was Miss Graham's opinion. I have nothing to do with it."

"You're a miserable bachelor."

"That's my own fault."

"O the conceit of mankind! I have no doubt he thinks, D., that he could be engaged to-morrow if he liked."

"Not the least question of it," he answered.

"Then why don't you set about it?" asked Valentine.

"I mean to do!—there is nothing I am more convinced of than that I should be happier married."

"O yes! that abstract question is settled, but the moment one ventures to point out some particular lady——"

"Why, then, being such a modest man, I always remark that I know she would not have me."

"Just hear him, D., how idly and contentedly he talks: not a spark of enthusiasm, no fervour, no earnestness. O Giles, I wouldn't be you for a good deal. You can sit opposite to the sweetest face, and the most killing hat and feather, and never remark them in the least."

"There you are mistaken; I admire the hat and feather exceedingly."

"And not the wearer, Giles?"

Before Giles could answer I started up and said it was time to be walking homewards. The conversation changed to boating and fishing. Valentine and I had been out the whole of the previous morning in a boat, and had only caught two very small mullet. We related our adventures, and Giles criticised the rigging of the fishing smacks. Then Valentine launched out in praise of my skill in rowing and climbing cliffs; my feats in walking long distances, and my other excellences, while I tried to stem the torrent of his encomiums, and Giles indulgently listened and smiled.

Liz and Mrs. Henfrey loved to sit in a bathing machine reading a novel. Giles liked sailing and fishing. And Valentine and I liked to ramble about, and sit talking under the cliffs. Sometimes in the evening Valentine sang, and Giles groaned over his false notes, and shivered with the torture his mistakes inflicted on him.

"What a pity you will sing, my dear!" said Mrs. Henfrey, one night. "Here's all this good accompanying lost upon you; whereas, if Dorothea played for Giles to sing to, it would be a treat to hear them."

This very unflattering speech for once put Valentine out of temper, and he marched into the little garden. I sat before the piano for a few minutes while Mrs. Henfrey continued her remarks to Giles, but he did not offer to sing nor I to play, and I presently went out into the moonlight, and soothed Valentine with a little harmless flattery, to the effect that I liked playing for him better than for any one else, and that he would soon sing better if he took pains.

Meanwhile, even as I talked to him, I seemed to become conscious of a slight change, which I appeared to myself then to have acted on before, though unconsciously. It seemed to have become my province to please him, no longer his to please me, and as I continued to excuse Mrs. Henfrey's speech, and show that I had always liked to play for him, I felt that several times before I had had the same kind of thing to do, and I said to myself that surely I need not trouble myself with the fear of ruling, for I had met with a master after all.

We went in again; but Valentine had not quite recovered his temper, and I by various little arts and slight attentions gradually restored it, till Giles helped me by proposing to read aloud, for which I was grateful, seeing that it was done on my behalf.

His voice, almost as fine in reading as in singing, was not without a soothing effect on Valentine; besides, the reading gave him space for reflection, and when it was over he talked as usual, till Anne Molton came to fetch me home, and he walked with me, when he burst out with, "I hate to be compared with Giles; the comparison is so damaging to me."

I said nothing, and he presently added—"It's astonishing to me that you can't see how much he is above me."

"I do see it. I see that he is above us both, but not in *everything*."

"In what one thing am I equal to him?"

"In temper. You have quite as good a temper as he has. I think rather a better one."

"Thank you, Dorothea. Anything else?"

"Yes; you are taller."

"Pooh."

"And handsomer."

"D., you will soon put me in a good temper."

"And more fond of ladies' society?"

"Yes."

"Particularly of mine?"

"That I am."

"We'll play and sing that song together to-morrow, when they are all out."

"So we will, Dorothea. Oh, what a nice little thing you are!"

So we did, taking care to see the remainder of the party safe out of the house. Then, when even I was weary of the practising, we came out, and wandered along the quiet shore towards a tiny cove, in which we often sat. We went on till we reached a promontory, from which the tide never receded, and climbed up a steep path till we stood on the top of it. It was crowned with a wood, which we passed through, and approached our cove from above, crossing the narrow promontory and looking down. On the soft, white sand below

a man was lying full length, leaning on his elbow and gazing out to sea.

"It's Giles," said Valentine. "Well, if we are not to have the place to ourselves, I would rather he shared it with us than that any one else did."

Giles had been so pleasant and brother-like to me lately, that I no longer felt ill at ease in his company, and stood looking on while Valentine set down the lunch-basket, and threw little pebbles towards him. They did not reach him. He was either asleep or in a deep fit of abstraction, and we slowly wound down the steep path towards him, nearly reaching him before he looked up; which he did at last with great gravity; and as he betrayed no surprise, and did not accost us, we took no notice of him, but set the basket down close to him, and spread the cloth, as if he had not been there, leaving him by slow degrees to rouse himself from his deep abstraction.

"When Mr. Brandon comes home," I said to Valentine, "he shall have some of these white-heart cherries."

"Comes home!" he asked. "From whence?"

"From wherever you have been, this last half-hour."

He darted a look at me, and an absolute flush mounted over his brow. "What is a man's home!" he asked, to my surprise. "Is it the place where his thoughts dwell?"

"I did not mean to raise such a question, and I cannot answer it, so I shall change my remark to Valentine, and say when Mr. Brandon comes down he shall have some of these white-heart cherries."

"Was it your pleasure to suppose that I had reached some height and was exulting there?"

"Yes; and looking down at the prospect," I replied, vexed at the evident despondency and almost shame of his manner, and wishing to convey to him, for the first time, some hint that I was grateful to him for his goodness to Valentine, in which I was to be the sharer. "You were looking down from some New Zealand eminence, perhaps, and you saw a pretty house, round the balconies of which I hear that you have planted some vines and some passion-flowers and some cluster roses."

"You are mistaken," he answered, hastily; "I was down, not up—very low down indeed—grovelling."

"Very well," I replied; "'He that is down need fear no fall.'"

"Hear, hear," said Valentine. "D., my dear, after the pains you have taken to cure me of quoting, I am pleased to find that you are taking to it yourself. Now, here we are. 'Rolls, ham sandwiches, buns, cherries, and ginger beer.' Dorothea, serve out the rations. Take a cabbage-leaf, settler, by way of a plate; we are rehearsing our parts to play life in New Zealand, Giles."

"In that case you had better dispense with the table-cloth."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, the hat and feather."

"No, Giles," said Valentine, with great seriousness; "I always mean her to have a hat and feather, and to be got up just as she is now: my happiness will greatly depend on that." He broke into a laugh as he spoke, and went on, "When you have a wife, I know you will be exceedingly particular about her dress."

"On the contrary, I mean to have one who will look well in anything."

"The old story, always looking for impossibilities. Liz heard from Jane Wilson yesterday."

"What has that to do with it?" said Mr. Brandon, thrown off his guard.

"You know best. They are coming. Dorothea, have you a spare cabbage-leaf for Giles to fan himself with, he looks hot? Jane's a fine creature. Don't laugh, D.; how can you be so unfeeling? I say, Giles, she's a fine creature."

"And these are fine cherries," said Mr. Brandon.

"Well, if there is one thing that I thoroughly detest it is a dogged insensibility to the charms of womankind."

I could not help saying, "I do not observe the insensibility." On the contrary, I did observe a curious kind of embarrassment and a mounting flush over the healthy forehead, and I thought to myself, "Jane Wilson's preference is rewarded at last."

I wondered whether she would understand him, or at all enter into the needs of a nature so peculiar, so strong, and so capable, as he had shown me, of a deep and almost romantic attachment. Sometimes people are conscious of other people's eyes, though they are looking away from them. Mr. Brandon was conscious of mine then I suppose, for he brought himself to glance at me, and I thought he had the air of a man who felt that he was found out.

He was quietly putting his hand into the dry white sand, and sifting it through his fingers in search of the minute shells that it contained, and at the same time humming over the words of a little French song.

"There's nothing more odd to my mind than to hear you sing," observed Valentine, "because your voice is so different from your feelings."

"You and Miss Graham are exceedingly personal in your remarks this morning," replied Giles, "and you neither of you know anything about my feelings."

"I know that you are a very jolly fellow, and that your feelings, whatever they may be, are kept as close as——"

"As potted shrimps," interrupted Giles, "with the layer of butter at top."

"And yet you sing like a nightingale with——"

"Stop, my lad, vary the simile ; say a stormcock with a hairpin sticking in, under his left pinion." And so saying he went on to the end of the little song, at first with a joyous defiant air that suited well with the words, and at last with a touch of tenderness that made the tears start into my eyes.

"D.," said Valentine, "what makes you look at Giles with that pretty kind of wistful interest? I suppose you are cogitating about him and the coming fair one."

This remark was naturally rather embarrassing to Giles, and I stammered out some foolish excuse, saying, that I did not know I had stared at him.

But I had been cogitating about him and the coming fair one, and so there was no denying it.

"I should like to hear Jane Wilson and Dorothea having a feminine quarrel," said Valentine, mischievously ; "it would be so pretty to hear that deep voice, mellow and manly, answered by this sweet little childish pipe so small and clear. Perhaps, Giles, we may hear them quarrel some day."

"You never will," I said. "I shall take a great interest in her."

Mr. Brandon replied with some hesitation, "Do, she is a good girl, and as to her voice some people consider it agreeable."

"Cautious," observed Valentine.

"Come, have done with this," said Giles, with sudden vehemence.

"To be sure. I'll talk of something else. Do you know, D., that last night late, Giles and I took a stroll, and I made a few observations in reply to a lecture that he gave me?"

"He told me what you had said respecting my temper, height, and features, Miss Graham. You need not look so much disconcerted, I felt flattered."

"I am glad of it."

"I am aware that you did not intend to flatter me, but Valentine ; but it is my humour to be cheerful."

"I forgot that Valentine was in the habit of telling everything to you."

"He is my safety-valve," observed Valentine ; "such a stunning fellow in general to hold his tongue and march on apparently listening, but often thinking of something else. Well, D., last night I was launching out a little about you, and he being very silent, I naturally thought he was attending."

"Poor Mr. Brandon !"

"And I was warming with my subject, and in the full tide of eloquence, when he heaved up a deep sigh and stopped short, looking out to sea. Being thus brought to, I stopped also and looked out, saying, 'What's the matter, old fellow?' and he answered after a pause, 'I've not eaten a single lobster since I've been at this stupid place.'

Only imagine, while I was enlarging on the sweets of domestic life and the happy future, he was thinking about eating!"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Brandon, that you should have so much to suffer on my account."

"Don't mention it," he answered, laughing.

"It's what he'll do himself when he is in my circumstances," said Valentine.

St. George, on hearing this, elevated his eyebrows with an air of astonishment and almost scorn. He seemed about to say something, but thought better of it, and laughed instead, not by any means with a flattering air, but as if, well as he knew Valentine, the remark had quite taken him by surprise.

"Well?" said Valentine.

"Is it a good or a bad thing for a man to have no thoughts or feelings too strong or too deep to be expressed?"

"Giles, you never used to put these metaphysical questions to a fellow. Why, a good thing I should say, when one has somebody to talk to."

This slight hint that Valentine's feelings could be neither deep nor strong hurt me, however, chiefly, I believe, because I supposed it to be correct, and I could not help saying that I had often heard it remarked how much the affections grew by being exercised. "Besides," I went on, conscious all the time that I was arguing against my own secret convictions, "people are not all gifted with equal powers of expression, and if two people feel equally, one may be able eloquently to describe while the other is mute, not from more feeling but from fewer words."

He seemed inclined to put the question by, but Valentine would not let him, and went on till he said, "I never had a thought or image in my mind that I could not translate into language, if I chose; but sensations and passions are different: words lie below them or fly over their heads. I cannot convey them unless they are slight and feeble, and that is lucky for me, for I have no desire to do so."

"I think I could," said Valentine.

"You could not convey to another person's mind the knowledge of what precise *degree* of anger you felt against him, or what pity or love for him; you would use superlatives to express the extreme of your love or your dislike, and he could but use the same superlatives, though he might be capable of ten times keener love and dislike."

"Yes," I said, "that is true, yet we know who feels much and who feels little; one man's words do not affect us because they do not affect himself, he says them with ease and coolness; another's affect us very much, though he may say less, because we see that he is affected by them himself, utters them with difficulty, and feels an intense meaning in them."

He smiled and answered, "You and I are not devoid of penetra-

tion ; we can read character and detect motives. We think so, do we not ? ”

“ I think I can read motives. ”

“ You know what motives would prompt *you* to certain actions, and therefore you impute them to others—to myself for instance. You and Valentine have been exercising your penetration on me all the morning. ”

“ Have we done it to any purpose ? ”

“ What an audacious young lady ! No, Valentine never hit the mark, but fell far short of it. ”

“ And I ? ”

“ You have occasionally appeared to me to come near it, but I have found afterwards that you had far overshot it. As a general rule, I should say that you are prone to do so ; you go too deep, and look too far off, and are too fond of analyzing. ”

“ Have I shown that to-day ? ”

“ Only with your eyes. ”

“ I shall be careful how I use my eyes for the future, and if possible seeing with me shall not be believing. ”

(To be continued.)

RAMBLES IN SUSSEX.

II.

THE sea is a greedy ogre on the West Sussex shore. Shingle covers what used to be sunnily sleepy meadows when I visited Lancing as a lad. One of the Worthing coastguard stations has been washed away, and the one at Goring—on the very edge of the beach—looks as if it were the Channel's next dish "to follow." Within twelve years two roads into Worthing were swallowed up. Corn used to grow where crabkins crawl at low watermark. Cricket-balls whizzed over green turf where now the green waves tumble. The original bath-house at Littlehampton—no very venerable antiquity—is a wave-washed ruin. "To the Sea" is a common inscription on the finger-posts of the West Sussex coast, and it must have a very disagreeable suggestiveness for West Sussex landowners. A rock off Shoreham is called the Church Rock, because, says guess or tradition, it is all that remains of a quarry from which the old church-builders of the neighbourhood used to get their materials. Selsea Cathedral the sea-ogre gobbled hundreds of years ago. Bracklesham Church went some four hundred years back, and some forty Middleton Church and churchyard were swept away, littering the sands with bleaching salt-candied bones. Kingston Church and Cudlawe Church have also been washed away. What remains of Cudlawe parish has been added to Clymping, whose noble old church seems also doomed to perish—not in the sea, but by the action of the wind and rain.

"There's not a breath of wind that blows,
But off the surface of it goes"—

its Horsham-stone tiles, to wit. The vicar is making most pluckily persevering efforts to get it restored or rather repaired, but it is not easy to raise £2000 in a country parish with a population of 300, chiefly poor. The vicar of Clymping was formerly the incumbent of the Mission Church in Club Row—"Bird Fair"—Shoreditch. (The Sugar-Works-like Mission House at Shoreditch, and the pretty vicarage at Clymping buried in foliage like a bird's nest, make a strange contrast.) He is, therefore, a man who is not afraid of hard work, and by precept and example has so stirred up his South Saxon parishioners during his short stay amongst them that, instead of a dame's school, Clymping now owns good National Schools, erected at a cost of £600, a considerable part of which came out of the slender clerical income, which makes the fine old tithe-barn hard by the vicarage seem such an ironical jest.

Clymping's pecuniary resources, therefore, are not equal to the raising of £2000, of which, however, something over £500 has been promised to the vicar. Speaking merely from an artistic point of view, I must say that it will be a sad pity if the other £1500 cannot be raised somehow or other. Let any connoisseur in church architecture, or simple admirer of the picturesque, cross the ferry at Littlehampton and walk past the peaceful-looking little fort, sleepily staring bullocks, and flower-bunched old cottages that seem to be nodding in the afternoon sunlight, to cruciform, lancet and rose-windowed Clymping Church, rising grey amid the grey grave-stones in its green God's acre, and he will say that he has been repaid for his trouble. Except the doorway in the Norman tower, there is not much of ornament about the church. It is *simplex munditiis*—beautiful from the effect of proportion. Inside, some of the old carved oak-seats, and part of a transept-screen, and a worm-eaten muniment-chest, and the old stone pulpit and font still remain, but damp, neglect, packing-case pews, whitewash, blinded windows, and cobbling repairs, sadly disfigure the effect of the interior, and the broken bells threaten to come crashing down through the rotten belfry-floors. In spite of the London leaven its new vicar has brought into it, Clymping is still almost as primitive a place as it was in the old smuggling days, of which its older inhabitants, an they would, could tell strange stories. There is not a shop in the parish, and within living memory the parson had a cart-whip hung up by the pulpit to keep the boys in order. Quite recently church-alsms were collected in a cheese-plate, and the chair for the communion table was borrowed from the vicarage dining-room. Before bidding good-bye to Clymping, I may mention that its kind-hearted vicar brought down some of his Club Row parishioners to his new parish, meeting them with a farmer's waggon at the nearest railway-station, and thence conveying them to a pic-nic on the shore. When the pale-faced, leaden-eyed East-enders saw for the first time the bright, blue, tossing sea, a good many of them were struck speechless with admiring awe. They sat down and looked and looked, but for a long time could not say a word.

And now for a walk to another interesting old church, kept in an order which is a painfully pleasant contrast to the state of things which lack of means, not lack of will, entails on Clymping.

Giraffe-necked steam-engines are puffing in the cornfields, and whirring bands are sending sheaves up inclined planes to the stack-tops, on which rustics fork them with a leisureliness which somehow seems more in keeping with the country than the puffs of steam. Carriages are rolling along the road, freighted with angels in glistening apparel, holding bouquets almost as big as frying-pans, and light-waistcoated non-angels with flowers in their buttonholes. The carriages pull up at the gate of Broadwater churchyard, the Union Jack

comes up sluggishly above the rich trees that cluster around Broadwater church-tower. A dame schoolmistress and her scholars are staring with all their eyes from their school-door at the fine carriage company. Other sightseers of a bolder turn are thronging into the church. Inside, the perspiring verger is collecting hassocks by the half-dozen at a time. There is evidently a grand wedding just about to come off, but instead of looking at the wedding, we will go in and look at the church. There are Crusader palm-branches on the capitals of the Norman pillars. There are old brasses, on one of which can be made out this jingle :—

“Migrat felicis orta Christi genetrix
Anno milleno & quatuor his X duodeno.”

There is the tomb of Thomas Lord la Warre, who graciously “bequeathed his body” for burial there, together with “twopence a-piece in alms to every poor man or woman who would come and receive it at the same church of Broadwater.” In the porch there is an old (empty) holy-water stoup. In the grassy, tree-shaded, crowded churchyard you read of the drowned, and of those who have come from all parts of England only to die at the seaside. I search for, but cannot find, an epitaph which, so far as my memory serves, I read on an infant’s grave here when I was a boy :—

“Like a dewdrop dried up by the sun’s early beam,
A short but a beauteous existence was given ;
The soul seemed to come down to earth in a dream,
And only to wake in ascending to heaven.”

One or two of the lords of the Broadwater manor may have been *chevaliers sans peur*, but they certainly were not *sans reproche*. Sir John de Gaddesden thus comported himself in a case in which he was defendant, at the suit of one Michael de Combe :—“John, having invited Michael to his house at Broadwater, made him very drunk, and then conveyed him home to Applesham, where he was shut up drunk, half dead, and not knowing good from evil. John then took Michael’s seal, and affixed it against his will to a deed of feoffment, in which he took possession of Michael’s manors and lands, which had come to him by purchase or inheritance. Having thus obtained the deed by fraud, he entered on the lands, and took corn and hay to the amount of twenty marks.” John’s descendants must feel proud of him ! John de Camois again, another lord of the manor, “of his own free will gave and demised his wife Margaret, daughter and heiress of John de Gaddesden, to Sir William Painell, Knight.”

Across Broadwater Green, famous for its cricket contests : a few young cricketers are already at work upon it, watched with lack-lustre eye by a wasted old man in a faded patched smock, who sits bent upon a rail, and looks so very old and frail that he might serve

for an emblem of Time just on the point of being no more. Over a stile into one of the Offington paddocks, where scattered noble oaks fret the greenly-golden grass with a network of cool shadows, in whose shelter the quicksilver drops of dew still tremble; and sheep baa and rooks caw as if thoughts of butcher's knives and sportsmen's air-canes never troubled the calm of those sunny-shady glades. The softened hum of the harvesting-machines harmonises here with the boom of the wild bees. In this next meadow, bossed with red clover and golden with coltsfoot-stars, burnished insects are rising and falling like spray. Over another Sussex stile. Besides the form of stiles common in most parts of England, Sussex has V-like openings in the walls, dwarf walls with stepping-stones on either side, and double sets of wooden steps set back to back, with a pole at the top to hold by. Into a lane where the hedges are almost smothered in traveller's-joy, out in green-creamy blossom. Such a hushed lane, laced with motionless leaf-shadows. The stillness is almost as deep as that of an empty church—but how different! Now and then a far off cock crows. Nearer at hand, in the tall trees on the other side of the grey wall green-patched with ivy-falls, the wood-pigeon keeps up from time to time a lazy, lulling croon; and then all becomes so still again that it is an event when a bird chirps, a fly buzzes, a green leaf rustles, or a prematurely yellow leaf comes slowly fluttering to the ground.

This lonely lane leads into the London road, which, although a little broader, is almost as still. A miller jolts by, nodding on his plump sacks for cushions, in his white-dusty cart. A bronzed reaper is sleeping in the rye-grass and poppies that make a little carpet between the high road and a field-gate, with his head on his arm and his arm on his bare scythe. A wheat-stalk puts its ear between the gate-bars and tickles the red nose of the brown reaper, but he still snores on. Two white and red calves are lying in the shade of a cut haystack, snuggling up one to another as if the month were bleak December instead of blazing August. In the garden of an old house kept together with iron clamps like big capital S's, or unfinished figures of 8, a faded old woman, in a faded old gown, pauses with a pail of water in one hand, and shades her eyes with the other, to see who is passing between the straggling clump of honeysuckles and the elder tree whose berries are beginning to turn reddish-black. Now and then I hear the shouts and laughter of the harvesters a field or two off. But no one offers to speak to me, except a little dog—just as I enter pretty tranquil little Findon. I am looking up at a board on a carpenter's shop. When I stop to read the inscription, the little dog lies down and wags his tail contentedly, as if he said, "*I should have barked at you, though, if you had had bad taste enough to go by without reading it.*" Thus this droll inscription runs—drolly reminding one in the peaceful heart of the lovely

Downs of the seductively leading-on style of "cutting" shopkeepers' advertisements in London :—

"The Necessaries of Life. A Fire in Winter, a Meal when Hungry, a Drink when Thirsty, a Bed at Night, a Friend in Need, a Lucifer Match in the Dark, A Good Wife, a Pipe of Tobacco if you like it. And your Horses Clipped well by Cooter and Son. Established 1844."

Past yellow-washed brick-and-beam cottages, with a row of holly-hocks in front, like a rank of Grenadier Guards, to the lodge of Findon Place, and thence through the pleasant park to the picturesque old church, in its sloping, grassy flower-planted tree-screened graveyard. The church has been restored, not transmogrified into inharmonious newness. The Down swells above it like a mother's breast above her infant's snuggling head. Bluebells tremble everywhere on the springy turf—almost as slippery as glass where steep, and Canterbury bells in profusion nod lower down along the chalky lanes. More wild clematis, with, as if to set off and be set off, a magnificent peacock butterfly fanning its wings upon one creamy cluster. Above Findon towers Cissbury, a natural stronghold, in which traces of ancient fortification can be plainly traced. Britons, Romans, Saxons occupied it in turn; and if a foe landed in Sussex, it might again be occupied.

But let us start for Chanctonbury over the glorious downs. How a young Australian would love them! For miles he could gallop over them without being pulled up by a fence. It is queer to see finger-posts inscribed "Steyning," "Sompting," etc., stuck into the barely wheel or hoof-marked turf. They look as lonely as the Ordnance Survey posts dotted here and there like them upon the downs. Even if one gets down into the ploughed portion of the downs, he can still walk for miles without interruption. If he finds himself stopped by a labourer's cottage, and asks for guidance to such or such a place, the tenant will tell him that "there ain't rightly any road this way, so to speak," but that he can go on "by the house," i.e., through the cottage garden, and over or through the cottage wall.

Cowper has been often laughed at for writing about "the tremendous height" of the Sussex hills, and there is something funny in the phrase; but I am not sure whether a good many of the braggers about Alpenstocks would not give in "blown," or have some comical tumbles, if taken as the crow flies over the undulating, slippery downs. In travelling "as the crow flies," you see, you cannot often travel *like* the crow. You have to go up and down hollows the crow goes *over*, and some of them are quite deep and fuzzy enough to make you look and feel very foolish, if you chance to miss your footing and go bumping to the bottom, a smarting bundle of irregularly revolving rags.

I love the South Downs, the short, close, slippery, aromatic turf, which gives and rises again beneath the foot like velvet-covered watchspring—on which one can walk for hours without seeing a single human face.

Down in the hollow yonder slowly spreads a flock of sheep, their bells tinkling like a tune on a glass harmonicon. There goes a flight of rooks, settling, strutting, and stealing presently on yonder unhedged yellow patch of reaped, but uncarried corn. Out of the gorse and ragwort up here gallops a hare. White-fudded rabbits pop in and out as if they were playing at chevy. From tiny bushes crawling a few inches along the ground one plucks big, ripe, juicy blackberries. Mushrooms you kick out of your way as if they were mere bleached manure. There goes a magpie. The leg presently struggles knee-deep through pink heather, and up flaps and flusters away a lonely speckled moor-fowl. Two carrion-crows rise slowly next, like a pair of bloated undertakers. The air is sweet with the scent of wild flowers and warm grass, over which flit blue butterflies with brown undersides to their wings.

At last the Ring is reached, a circular clump of trees 820 feet above the level of the sea, vulgarly called "old Goring's hunting-cap." A good many of the trees have prematurely-faded leaves. In the core of the clump a woodpigeon is crooning. In front for many a mile spreads the pale-blue sea, a gauzy white mist hovering between it and the blue sky, blotched with a few brown rainclouds. Nearer at hand there is a sea of Downs interfolding like velvet. Here and there the green is patched with the yellow of a corn-field, the yellow-brown of stubble, the brown of fallow, the white of a chalk-pit, or a chalky lane, and the light-blue of a round shallow sheep-pond. There is a little rich wood in a few sheltered places. Bushes and stunted trees straggle along the sides of yonder gorge. At the bottom of the next hollow snuggles an old farmhouse, in the midst of barns, stables, cattle-stalls, cart-lodges, and tall sheltering trees.

On the other side of the Ring the Down drops almost sheer into the wooded Weald. One feels in walking round as if one would drop off, as from a table, on to the varied scene spread below like a carpet. In the distance are the filmy Surrey hills. The South Downs run into and sink in the plain like promontories into the sea. The plain is an embossed map of fallows, corn-fields, meadows, hedges, rifle-green trees in rows, in clumps, in woods, and single; cottages, grey-thatched, red-tiled, yellow-gabled farmsteads, ricks, churches, manure heaps, black heaps of cut peas, sheep, bullocks, deer, straight roads and winding lanes, and black mills with white sails. It was on Chanctonbury Ring that Copley Fielding studied and sketched Sussex landscape. The lack of water on the landside is the only fault in the prospect. The men and boys in the harvest-field below look like big ants, but their shouts can be heard and distinguished. A dinner bell rings out, and the clink of a far-off blacksmith's hammer comes faintly up to the sighing trees on the breezy height.

CHARLES CAMDEN.

VICTOR HUGO'S NEW POEM.

MANY a long year has now elapsed since the advent of the Romantic School filled the aged Goethe with horror, causing him to predict for modern Art a chaotic career and a miserable termination ; and grey now are the beards of the students who flocked in cloaks and slouch hats to applaud the first performance of "Hernani" at the national theatre. Since those merry days a new generation has arisen, and more than one mighty landmark has been swept away. Goethe is dead ; so are dozens of minor Kings,—not to speak of Louis Philippe. The sin of December has been committed and expiated ; the man of Sedan has been arraigned before the bar of the world, and received as sentence the contempt and execration of all humanity ; and meantime, the exile of Guernsey, after a period of fretful probation, has gone back to the bosom of his beloved France. Political changes have been fast and furious. Not less fast and furious have been the literary revolutions. The poor bewildered spectator, be his proclivities political or literary, has been hurried along so rapidly that he has scarcely had time to get breath. There lies France, a mighty Ruin. Beyond rises Deutschthumm, a portentous Shadow, at which the veteran of Weimar would have shivered. Here comes Victor Hugo, with his new poem. And Chaos, such as Goethe predicted, is every way fulfilled !

How great I hold Victor Hugo to be in reference to his own time I need not say : veritably, perhaps, there is no nobler name on the whole roll of contemporary creators ; but I surely express a very natural and a very common sentiment when I say that every fresh approach of this prodigy is bewildering to the intellect. We have had so frequently during the last generation the spectacle of reckless trading in high departments—in politics more particularly ; we have beheld so constantly the collapse of governmental windbags and social balloons of the Hausmann sort ; we have stood by helpless so often while the mad Masters of the world played their wild and fantastic tricks before high heaven, and moved sardonically from one bloody baptism to another ; we have seen so much evil come of empty words and vain professions, and moral bunkum generally—that we may be pardoned, perhaps, for regarding with a certain alarm that sort of *literature* which, with all its wonderful genius, may fairly be described as reckless also—reckless and blind to all artistic consequences. "Worts! worts! worts!" said Sir Hugh Evans ; and here, in all the latest efflorescence of what was once the Romantic, and

may now fairly be called the Chaotic, School, we have Words innumerable—brilliant and musical, doubtless, but wild and aimless; every sentence with a cracker in its tail, till we get utterly indifferent to crackers; image piled on image, epithet on epithet, phrase choking phrase; here a catherine-wheel of ecstasy, there a rocket of fierce appeal; a blaze of colour everywhere, all the hues of the prism (except the perfect product of all, which is pure white light); the whole forming a dazzling, hissing, spluttering Firework of human speech. "How very fine!" we exclaim; "there's a rocket for you! look at these raining silver lights! Ah, this is something like an exhibition!" But after it is all over, and the sceptical ones point out to us the wretched darkened canvas framework where the last sparks are lingering and the last smuts falling, we are angry at our own enthusiasm, and feel like men who have been befooled. After all, we reflect, the place is only Cremorne; the object merely the amusement of a crowd of gaping pleasure-seekers who pay so much a head. It has been a vulgar entertainment at the best; and we try to forget it, looking up, as the smoke clears, at the silent stars. This mood, however, is still more unfair than the other. Truly enough, we have been present at fireworks, but on a scale of tremendous genius. A great master has been condescending for our amusement, and has actually worked wonders with his materials. Nor is this all. When a poet like Victor Hugo, yielding to the daimonic influence of his own spirit, produces for us in public all the wild resources of his fearless art, he cannot fail to awaken in us forces which slumber at the touch of any other living man. We may resent the emotion as a weakness, but the emotion exists: we are lifted by it as on the wings of the wind, and driven "darkly fearfully afar." The scenery of the spectacle may be tawdry, but it is outlined with a mighty hand; the lights may be only wretched rushlights, but what a strange lurid gleam they shed over the rude and gigantic towers and battlements of the scene! It is magnificent, although it is not nature; it is full of infinite suggestion, though it is not art. The power is unbounded; the only question that remains being, Is the power squandered? Much, doubtless, is squandered; and it is this persistent waste which, corresponding as it does to French waste generally, fills one with suspicion and alarm. Reckless writing has its delights, like reckless trading, like reckless fighting and swaggering; but will it not lead to the same end as these others? Concentrated and reserved for specific efforts, instead of being frivolously spent in every direction, the same genius who limned Jean Valjean and Fantine might yet rise to his due place and glory as the *Æschylus* of his generation.

After all, it is doubtful if *Æschylus*, doomed to live in these latter days, would have kept his head. Even as it was, he "let go" tremendously, and was far, very far, from being a steady-brained bard;

his vision repeatedly overmastering him, and his utterance becoming thick and confused with portentous weight of matter. His lot was easy, however, compared with that of the modern who has aspired to perform *Æschylean* functions in the nineteenth century, by chronicling in tremendous poetic cipher the ravings and sufferings of *our Titan*; and it is, therefore, an open question whether Victor Hugo is not a greater than even *Æschylus*, in so far as he has grappled with, and to some extent triumphed over, difficulties to all intents and purposes insuperable. I, for my part, find more to move my homage in Jean Valjean than in the *Prometheus*. I hold that one figure, rudely as it is drawn, to be in some respects the very noblest conception of this generation; and I would look on at fireworks for ever, if once or twice such a face as Jean's shone out with its heaven-like promise. Gilliatt, too, is noble in the *Promethean* direction;—and so is *Quasimodo*. Indeed, I know not where to look, out of *Æschylus*, for figures conceived on the same scale, so typical, so colossal; looming upon us from a stage of mighty amplitude, with a grand Greek background of mountain and sky. They have the Greek freedom and the Greek limitations. Jean Valjean, just as surely as *Prometheus*, wears the mask, and is elevated on the *cothurnus*; whence at once his extraordinary stature and his one fixed expression of changeless and monotonous pain. Would we choose rather the mobile human face and the free motion of men on a small stage, we must enter the *Globe Theatre* and hear the wonderful acting of the English players; but with Victor Hugo, as with the father of *Athenian drama*, we are limited to one mood and wearied by one high-pitched chant. Even if this were perfectly done, it would grow wearisome; but being far from perfectly done, being at once wearisome and chaotic, it depresses as often as it elevates, and makes us long for a breezier music and a fresher, kindlier movement of face and limb. Nor can Victor Hugo's greatest admirers deny the fact that he deliberately overclouds his conceptions with verbiage, and blurs what was originally a noble outline by subsequent attempts at elaboration. Our first glimpse of his figures moves us most; our further examination of them is fraught with pain; and not till we have closed our eyes to contemplate the impression left upon the mind, do we again feel how greatly the figures were originally conceived. This writer triumphs invariably by sheer force of primary pictorial vision; triumphs generally in defiance of his own incapacity to *paint* exquisitely. Reckless (as I have expressed it) of all literary consequences, he produces works which are at once miracles of imagination and marvels of bad taste. Directly we have got the outline of his picture, all further study of it is unsatisfactory; we must fill in the tints for ourselves. Compare the "*Prometheus*" of *Æschylus* with "*Les Misérables*" of Victor Hugo, and perceive the difference between power concentrated and power recklessly driven away. The whole episode

of Jean Valjean could have been compressed into a tragedy, and, given in such quintessence, would have been an unmixed pleasure to all time. As it is, we doubt whether posterity will do justice to a production so shapeless, so interminable; and this is the more irritating, as it contains in dilution more colossal imagery than anything we have had in Europe since the "Divine Comedy."

Viewed simply for what he is, Hugo is very great; but viewed for what he might have been, he is persistently disappointing. With every fresh year of his life he has grown two-fold—in power of conception and power of windiness; until we now recognise in him a god of the elements indeed, but one with more affinity to Boreas than to Apollo. It was doubtless in an unlucky moment that he first freed himself from rhythmic fetters. His was just the sort of genius that needed to be bound and drilled. Let loose on the mighty fields of prose, he knows no limit to his wanderings, and he follows his jerky fancies from one sentence to another, like a snipe-shooter floundering, popping, and perspiring in an Irish marsh. He will go epigram-hunting through a whole series of chapters, at the most critical point of his narrative. A single word (take "Waterloo" in a certain part of "*Les Misérables*") is Will-o'-the-wisp enough to keep him rushing through the dark till the reader faints for very weariness. If Goethe was, as Novalis described him to be, the Evangelist of Economy, Victor Hugo is assuredly the Evangelist of Waste. A prodigy of less supreme energy would have collapsed long ago under such tremendous exertions; but he, just when we expect to see him sink altogether, springs from the solid earth with fresh vigour. Genius, he has told us in "*William Shakspeare*," is not circumscribed. Exaggeration, moreover, is the glory of genius. "*Cela, c'est l'Inconnu! Cela, c'est l'Infini! Si Corneille avait cela, il serait l'égal d'Eschyle. Si Milton avait cela, il serait l'égal d'Homère. Si Molière avait cela, il serait l'égal de Shakspeare.*" We have here, in a nutshell, the Apotheosis of literary Waste; but it would not be difficult to show that none of Hugo's typical sublimities—Homer, Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Juvenal, Percival, St. John, St. Paul, Tacitus, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakspeare—exhausted their energies in the fashion peculiar to the author of "*L'Homme qui Rit*." The truth is, Hugo attempts to elevate into a system the recklessness which, in his own case, is sheer matter of temperament. His mind is for ever pitched in too high a tone of excitement; febrile symptoms, with him, characterise the normal intellectual condition. He is always high-strung, with or without provocation, evincing that excited French power of superficial passion, whether his themes be the wrongs of poor humanity or the loss of a hat-box at a railway station. A cynical foreigner would accuse him of attitudinizing. He spouts and strides. Not content with being recognised as *Æschylus*, he at times affects the graces of *La Fontaine*. His humour, nevertheless, is very grim. Nor is his

satire much better. His true mood is Eccles's mood—your true nineteenth century heroic.

And now, surely, if ever, might such a poet find truly heroic matter made to his hand ; now might he compose for us the latter Iliad and the greater ; choosing for his theme a stranger siege than that of Troy, and a national sentiment nobler and more stirring than ever moved the heart of Agamemnon or any Greek. If great events can manufacture great song, surely such song shall rise soon, whether as a psalm or a dirge ; but, meantime, the one man who was capable of expressing in colossal cipher, the supreme issues of this Franco-Teutonic struggle, and of aggrandizing, through sheer chaotic imagination, figures which are yet too near to us for realistic poetic treatment, has contented himself with keeping a sort of diary in verse of the principal events of the great war, beginning at the Plébiscite, and ending (for the time being, at least) with Henri Cinq's refusal to abandon the White Flag. Of course, such a Diary, even if kept by a much smaller man, could not fail to be interesting. Kept by Hugo, it necessarily lacks the true piquancy of the best Diaries, that of *brevity* ; but it abounds in fine little touches of self-revelation ; and if, on the whole, it fails to fill us with a due sense of the magnitude of the events, it describes, that also was inevitable, because it again and again occupies the ground already covered by the public journals. Politically speaking, I believe it to be written, every line, on the side of the Truth ; nor do I know how to conceal my admiration and wonder at the unerring fidelity with which the writer, amid all his self-consciousness and attitudinizing, reaches straight at the throat of every public fallacy which bars his path. Let this praise, now as ever, be conceded to Victor Hugo : his imagination never leads him into the region of Lies. He strikes on the side of Humanity. His vision is far-reaching, puissant, perhaps solitary, just now in France. He sees with those who prophesy human regeneration. One of the most earnest poems in his book has for its theme the barbaric *stupidity* of War. All are instinct with the truest Republican sentiment and the strongest natural piety. The last chronicles the doom of the Old World, and after that, the Deluge ! Thank heaven, however, Hugo does not recognise the Noah of the period in M. Thiers.

The diary opens with a prologue, entitled, " Les 7,500,000 Oui," which first saw the light in the *Rappel* :—

" Quant à flatter la foule, ô mon esprit, non pas !

Ah ! le peuple est en haut, mais la foule est en bas."

This is the key-note of the poem, and it is a vehement protest against the fallacy that the blind and confused element of *number* in itself constitutes the People. No ; the people works, not in dark, crude masses, but through tremendous *individuals*, who do right in its name. Gracchus, Leonidas, Schwitz, Winkelried, Washington, Bolivar, Manin,

Garibaldi ;—these are the People ; and they have nothing in common with that vile, blind, confused Mob—sombre weakness and sombre force—which ever and anon, outraging the “august conscience” of the world, orders Man to receive some wretched Master—the creature of blind and multitudinous “choice.” “O multitude !” exclaims the poet, “we will resist thee.”—

“ Nous ne voulons, nous autres,
Ayant Danton pour père et Hampden pour aïeul,
Pas plus du tyran Tous que du despote Un Seul.”

The People is married to the Idea ; the Populace leagues itself to the Guillotine. The People constitutes itself into the Republic ; the Populace accepts Tiberius. Then comes the following burst of strong eloquence, forensic rather than poetic, as indeed may be said, with certain reservations, of the whole poem :—

“ Le droit est au-dessus de Tous ; nul vent contraire
Ne le renverse ; et Tous ne peuvent rien distraire
Ni rien aliéner de l'avenir commun.
Le peuple souverain de lui-même, et chacun
Son propre roi ; c'est là le droit. Rien ne l'entame.
Quoi ! l'homme que voilà qui passe, aurait mon âme !
Honte ! il pourrait demain, par un vote hébété,
Prendre, prostituer, vendre ma liberté !
Jamais. La foule un jour peut couvrir le principe ;
Mais le flot redescend, l'écume se dissipe,
La vague en s'en allant laisse le droit à nu.
Qui donc s'est figuré que le premier venu
Avait droit sur mon droit ! qu'il fallait que je prisse
Sa bassesse pour joug, pour règle son caprice !
Que j'entrasse au cachot s'il entre au cabanon !
Que je fusse forcé de me faire chainon
Parce qu'il plaît à tous de se changer en chaîne !
Que le pli du roseau devint la loi du chêne ! ”

In the same strain of mingled mockery and defiance, the prologue continues ; but the peroration rises into a far higher mood of truly characteristic imagery :—

“ Oh ! qu'est-ce donc qui tombe autour de nous dans l'ombre ?
Que de flocons de neige ! En savez-vous le nombre ?
Comptez les millions et puis les millions !
Nuit noire ! on voit rentrer au gîte les lions ;
On dirait que la vie éternelle recule ;
La neige fait, niveau hideux du crépuscule,
On ne sait quel sinistre abaissement des monts ;
Nous nous sentons mourir si nous nous endormons ;
Cela couvre les champs, cela couvre les villes ;
Cela blanchit l'égout masquant ses bouches viles ;
La lugubre avalanche emplit le ciel terni ;
Sombre épaisseur de glace ! Est-ce que c'est fini ?
On ne distingue plus son chemin ; tout est piège.
Soit.

Que restera-t-il de toute cette neige,
Voile froid de la terre au suaire pareil,
Demain, une heure après le lever du soleil ? ”

Whatever may be said of the poetic merit of this passage, it will be admitted that it could only have been written by Victor Hugo.

After this, the diary begins in earnest. “August, 1870,” and of course—“Sedan.” Forthwith is conjured up before our vision the wretched Napoleonic phantom, who is gloomily and fatuously soliloquizing. “I reign; yes! But I am despised; and I must be feared. I mean in my turn to become master of the world. I have *not yet* taken Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Naples, Dantzic, Munich, Dresden; that is all to come. I will subdue that perfidious old Albion. I will be great. I will have Pope, Sultan, and Czar for my valets. I can demolish Prussia.” And so on, in the well-known strain of “Napoléon le Petit.” After further determining to set all Europe by the ears, and to be puissant Arbiter of the quarrel, he arranges to begin proceedings at once, under cover of “the night.” But he has been reckoning without his host. “It was broad day! Day at London, at Rome, at Vienna; and all people had their eyes open, except this man. He believed that it was night, because he was *blind*! All saw the light, and he alone saw the shade.”

“Tous voyaient la lumière et seul il voyait l'ombre.

Hélas! sans calculer le temps, le lieu, le nombre,
A tâtons, se fiant au vide, sans appui,
Ayant pour sûreté ses ténèbres à lui,
Ce suicide prit nos fiers soldats, l'armée
De France devant qui marchait la renommée,
Et sans canons, sans pain, sans chefs, sans généraux,
Il conduisit au fond du gouffre les héros.
Tranquille, il les mena lui-même dans le piège.

—Où vas-tu ? dit la tombe. Il répondit: que sais-je ?”

The terrible result is pictured with quaint power. “Two vast forests made of the heads, arms, feet, voices of men, and of swords and terror, march upon each other and mingle. Horror!” In the midst of a carnage too dreadful for pen to picture, amid the roar of cannon and the shriek of the dying, when all things bled, fought, struggled, and died, one voice, one “monstrous cry,” was heard: “LET ME LIVE!” (Je veux vivre!) “The stupefied cannon was silent, the drunken *mêlée* paused;” and *then*, to the amaze and horror of united Europe,—

“Alors la Gaule, alors la France, alors la gloire,
Alors Brennus, l'audace, et Clovis, la victoire,
Alors le vieux titan celtique aux cheveux longs,
Alors le groupe altier des batailles, Châlons,

Tolbiac la farouche, Arezzo la cruelle,
 Bovines, Marignan, Beaugé, Mons-en-Puelle,
 Tours, Ravenne, Agnadel sur son haut palefroi,
 Fornoue, Ivry, Coutras, Cérisolles, Rocroy,
 Denain et Fontenoy, toutes ces immortelles
 Mêlant l'éclair du front au flamboiement des ailes,
 Jemmape, Hohenlinden, Lodi, Wagram, Eylau,
 Les hommes du dernier carré de Waterloo,
 Et tous ces chefs de guerre, Héristal, Charlemagne,
 Charles-Martel, Turenne, effroi de l'Allemagne,
 Condé, Villars, fameux par un si fier succès,
 Cet Achille, Kléber, ce Scipion, Desaix,
 Napoléon, plus grand que César et Pompée,
Par la main d'un bandit rendirent leur épée."

This finishes the record for August; and leaves the reader plenty to reflect over in all conscience!

If we detach this characteristic writing from its political associations, and set aside for a moment our natural sympathy with the sentiments its wild imagery expresses, we shall possibly conclude that it is neither very trenchant nor very admirable. As a literary effort, it is not much beyond *Vermesch*; and as political philosophy, it is of about *Rochfort's* calibre. Now that the first fever of excitement is over, let us admit that, after all, the man of Sedan was a Scapegoat as well as "a Bandit." For my own part, I believe the man to have been what France made him, less disposed to military glory than to social pleasure, and quite content to slumber on his laurels if the world would have permitted him. He had created his Monster just as *Frankenstein* did before him; and the gigantic creature—the portentous and shadowy *Oui* of the *Plébiscite*—drove him on and up in his very soul's despite. His ambitious days were over. He ever hated the sword-flash. He had never recovered the shock of Mexico. His best friends had died away and left him. Feebly, clumsily, protestingly, he drifted the way his Monster drove him,—through the Baptism of Fire to the feet of the Teuton bigot at Sedan; and then, even then, in spite of his utter collapse and shame, he did not "want to die." This dislike to die a Roman death has been hurled at him with most inconsequent scorn by others besides Victor Hugo; but why on earth should they have expected anything so heroic, when on their own showing the old gentleman was so contemptible a speculator? *He die? he play the hero? Wherefore?* And again on what showing would self-immolation have been noble? We do not particularly admire the gambler who after having lost his all blows out his brains or hangs himself to a tree. We merely call him a fool for his pains; a fool, not a hero. It is therefore highly illogical to taunt the man of Sedan with having completely realized our own conception of his character. He calmly accepted his loss, and saved his skin: a very contemptible course, but still

very natural, since the man was never anything but a gambler. It is, moreover, useless now for France to gird and gibe afresh at the Scapegoat. He lives; and that is all. He is a poor creature; but was he ever anything more? Success or failure cannot alter such a nature; and the man of December was the man of Sedan. For all that, France failed when he failed, bringing to a crisis that insatiable avarice of power which has been her curse since Buonaparte syrped and drugged the Revolution. No sane man denies that the war, had it culminated with Sedan, would have been an unmixed blessing to the human race.

"September;" and the plot thickens. First comes a poem entitled "Choice between the Two Nations," in which there is a long complimentary address to Germany, followed by three pregnant words addressed to France—"O ma mère!" After that we have some smart satire addressed to "Prince Prince et Demi," ending with the memorable avowal that the war between the ex-Emperor of France and the King of Prussia was simply a misunderstanding between two robbers—Cartouche and Schinderhannes! This is merely the prelude to still stronger abuse of the Teuton leader—"madly served by all those whom he oppresses, the Ogre of Right Divine, devout, correct, moral, born to become Emperor, and to remain Corporal."

"Ici c'est le Bohême et là c'est le Sicambre.
Le coupe-gorge lutte avec le deux-décembre. . . .
Oui, Bonaparte est vil, mais Guillaume est atroce,
Et rien n'est imbécile, hélas, comme le gant
Que ce filou naïf jette à ce noir brigand."

The dénouement comes very speedily. "O France, a puff of wind scatters in one moment that shade of Cæsar and that shade of a Host." Ere September is over, the iron rings are closing around Paris. On the last day of the eventful month, Hugo addresses a lively poem to his little grandchild. "You were a year old yesterday, my darling! O Jeanne, and your sweet prattle mingles with the sound of the mighty Paris under its armour." The verses are in the poet's best and simplest style—far superior to his ordinary invective.

As the month of the chill wind and the yellow leaf breaks upon us, we find the poet yielding to its solemnizing influence, and glancing sadly back over his past years of exile. The mood swiftly changes; for Hugo is in Paris, and he can see the glittering legions at the gates. "They are there, threatening Paris. They punish it. *Why?* For being France, and for being the Universe! . . . They punish France for being Liberty. They punish Paris for being that city where Danton thunders, where Molière shines, where Voltaire laughs. They punish Paris for being the Soul of the World." On the face of

it, this reads like nonsense ; but, beneath the surface, it is superbly true, as any man may convince himself who dispassionately reviews the history of Europe, from the Coalition downwards. However, the Seven Chiefs are "not to blame." They are "black forces fighting against right, light, and love," by the sheer laws of their diabolic natures. Seven princes—the cipher of evil—Wurtemberg, Nassau, Saxony, Baden, Mecklenburg, Bavaria, Prussia ; in other words, "Hate, Winter, War, Mourning, Pestilence, Famine, Ennui."

"Paris devant son mur a sept chefs comme Thèbe !"

"Unheard of spectacle ! Erebus besieging the Star."

Mists rise, darkness gathers ; it is "November." Victor Hugo addresses the coming night from the battlements ; and, lifting his eyes to the horizon, sees the sunset like the blood-red blade of a sword. He thinks of some great duel "of a monster against a god," and seems to behold "the terrible sword of heaven, red and fallen to earth, after a battle." In the next piece, he eagerly defends Paris against the scandals spoken concerning her at Berlin ; and, turning from the praise of his beloved city, he addresses the Teuton princes in a number of verses which are meant to be sarcastic, but are really without point or sting. Here, however, we get a coarse, but magnificent image.

"Soit, princes. Vantrez-vous sur la France conquise.
De l'Alsace aux abois, de la Lorraine en sang,
De Metz qu'on vous vendit, de Strasbourg frémissant
Dont vous n'éteindrez pas la tragique auréole,
Vous aurez ce qu'on a des femmes qu'on viole,
La nudité, le lit, et la haine à jamais.

Oui, le corps souillé, froid, sinistre désormais,
Quand on les prend de force en des étreintes viles,
C'est tout ce qu'on obtient des vierges et des villes."

In small things, as in great, waste is fatal ; and the above passage is spoiled by the last three lines, thrust in on account of the irresistible alliteration of "vierges" and "villes." Following in due sequence, we have a number of short pieces of no great importance, except perhaps the spirited address to a certain Bishop who called the poet an "Atheist." Some tender lines "to a child ill during the siege" conclude the diary for November.

"December" opens wildly, with a bleak wind of protestation against the dismemberment of France. Then come some lines on Grant's message ; bitter lines enough, and, God knows, bitter with reason ; after that, an address to a certain cannon named after the poet, and a description of the forts, "the enormous watch-dogs of Paris ;" and then some sad words "to France," in which we come in for our turn of blame.

" *Personne pour toi.* Tous sont d'accord. Celui-ci,
Nommé Gladstone, dit à tes bourreaux : merci !
Cet autre, nommé Grant, te conspué, et cet autre,
Nommé Bancroft, t'outrage ; ici c'est un apôtre,
La c'est un soldat, là c'est un juge, un tribun,
Un prêtre, l'un du Nord, l'autre du Sud ; pas un
Que ton sang, à grands flots versé, ne satisfasse ;
Pas un qui sur ta croix ne te crache à la face.
Hélas ! qu'as-tu donc fait aux nations ? "

The outrage was completed, and there was "no one for her." Dogberry looked on as usual, with his arms folded—self-constituted policeman of the world, but more like one of those rheumatic old watchmen who walked about all night announcing the weather, but fled into their boxes at the slightest whisper of danger. "No one for her!" Yes, the Dead!

"O morts pour mon pays, je suis votre envieux !"

It is the end of the year, and France lies bleeding at the feet of the robber. Germany has triumphed indeed ; but whose will be the *final* victory, asks the poet, as the year dies out? Low as France lies, her spirit already penetrates afar, and strikes at the very heart of the constitutional fallacies which form the present strength of the German Confederation. The Earthquake began in Paris ; hushed for a space, it will reappear again at Berlin. The whole of this final address to Germany must be read and studied, to realize its grand revolutionary flavour. It is one of the finest things in the book ; perhaps the one poem which reads like an inspiration. I detach the concluding lines from the context, for the sake of their wonderful music and sublime prophecy :

"Non, vous ne prendrez pas la Lorraine et l'Alsace,
Et je vous le redis, Allemands, quoi qu'on fasse,
C'est vous qui serez pris par la France. Comment ?
Comme le fer est pris dans l'ombre par l'aimant ;
Comme la vaste nuit est prise par l'aurore ;
Comme avec ses rochers, où dort l'écho sonore,
Ses cavernes, ses trous de bêtes, ses halliers,
Et son horreur sacrée et ses loups familiers,
Et toute sa feuillée informe qui chancelle,
Le bois lugubre est pris par la claire étincelle.
Quand nos éclairs auront traversé vos massifs ;
Quand vous aurez subi, puis savouré, pensez,
Cet air de France où l'âme est d'autant plus à l'aise
Qu'elle y sent vaguement flotter la Marseillaise ;
Quand vous aurez assez donné vos biens, vos droits,
Votre honneur, vos enfants, à dévorer aux rois ;
Quand vous verrez César envahir vos provinces ;
Quand vous aurez pesé de deux façons vos princes,
Quand vous vous serez dit : ces maîtres des humains
Sont lourds à notre épaule et légers dans nos mains ;
Quand, tout ceci passé, vous verrez les entailles

Qu'auront faites sur nous et sur vous les batailles ;
 Quand ces charbons ardents dont en France les plis
 Des drapeaux, des linéola, des âmes, sont remplis,
 Auront ensemencé vos profondeurs funèbres,
 Quand ils auront creusé lentement vos ténèbres,
 Quand ils auront en vous couvé le temps voulu,
Un jour, soudain, devant l'affreux sceptre absolu,
Devant les rois, devant les antiques Sodomes,
Devant le mal, devant le joug, vous, forêt d'hommes,
 Vous aurez la colère énorme qui prend feu ;
 Vous vous ouvrirez, gouffre, à l'ouragan de Dieu ;
 Gloire au Nord ! ce sera l'aurore boréale
 Des peuples, éclairant une Europe idéale !
 Vous crierez :—Quoi ! des rois ! quoi donc ! un empereur !—
 Quel éblouissement, l'Allemagne en fureur !
 Va, peuple ! O vision ! combustion sinistre
 De tout le noir passé, prêtre, autel, roi, ministre,
 Dans un brasier de foi, de vie et de raison,
 Faisant une lueur immense à l'horizon !
 Frères, vous nous rendrez notre flamme agrandie.
Nous sommes le flambeau, vous serez l'incendie."

After that, January, 1871, may open a little more gaily. In a charming letter sent by balloon-post, we get a picture of the internal life of Paris during the siege. "I have given 15 francs for four fresh eggs, not for myself, but for my little George and my little Jeanne. We eat horse, rat, bear, and donkey flesh ;" and so on in a very graphic description. A little further on, we find a poem entitled "The Pigeon," in which the city is compared, not very felicitously, to a dark lake, and the bird to a black speck in heaven. "The Atom comes in the shade to succour the Colossus." Rather more felicitous is the *Sortie*. "And the women with calm faces and broken hearts hand them their guns, first *kissing* them." After this, we get nothing very striking until (passing over certain savage addresses to the Germans in reference to the capitulation) we come to the end of the month of February, at which point of the diary we find a striking poem on "Progress." It is very long, but very powerful ; eloquent rather than poetic. The canto which follows, under the head of "March," may be passed over without comment, as it is chiefly devoted to personal misfortune. In "March" the poet lost his beloved son Charles, who died very suddenly. The misfortune is chronicled in some affecting, but rather theatrical, verses.

From this point the diary may be said to fuse itself into one long passionate political chant. April, May, and June, 1871 ;—who does not recollect the terrors and the agonies of those months ? As they advance, the poet's fury increases. "Paris Incendié" is a terrific piece of fiery declamation. "The two Trophies" fiercely pleads for the Vendôme Column and the Arc de Triomphe. All the world knows in which direction flowed the sympathies of Victor Hugo ; all the world knows also how the poet was driven out of Brussels, because,

as a high-souled patriot, he dared to utter the bitter and unpalatable *truth*. There are many poems expressive of personal feeling at this part of the diary—many strong and incisive words of protest and recrimination—but, to my mind, the simplest and best is “A Qui la Faute?” It speaks for itself, in its terrible subdued irony, and I transcribe it entire :—

“A QUI LA FAUTE?”

Tu viens d'incendier la Bibliothèque ?

—Oui.

J'ai mis le feu là.

—Mais c'est un crime inoui !

Crime commis par toi contre toi-même, infâme !

Mais tu viens de tuer le rayon de ton âme !

C'est ton propre flambeau que tu viens de souffler !

Ce que ta rage impie et folle ose brûler,

C'est ton bien, ton trésor, ta dot, ton héritage !

Le livre, hostile au maître, est à ton avantage.

Le livre a toujours pris fait et cause pour toi.

Une bibliothèque est un acte de foi

Des générations ténébreuses encore

Qui rendent dans la nuit témoignage à l'aurore.

Quoi ! dans ce vénérable amas des vérités,

Dans ces chefs-d'œuvre pleins de foudre et de clartés,

Dans ce tombeau des temps devenu répertoire,

Dans les siècles, dans l'homme antique, dans l'histoire,

Dans le passé, leçon qu'épelle l'avenir,

Dans ce qui commença pour ne jamais finir,

Dans les poètes ! quoi, dans ce gouffre des bibles,

Dans le divin monceau des Eschyles terribles,

Des Homères, des Jobs, debout sur l'horizon,

Dans Molière, Voltaire et Kant, dans la raison,

Tu jettes, misérable, une torche enflammée !

De tout l'esprit humain tu fais de la fumée !

As-tu donc oublié que ton libérateur,

C'est le livre ? le livre est là sur la hauteur ;

Il luit ; parce qu'il brille et qu'il les illumine,

Il détruit l'échafaud, la guerre, la famine ;

Il parle ; plus d'esclave et plus de paria.

Ouvre un livre. Platon, Milton, Beccaria.

Lis ces prophètes, Dante, ou Shakspeare, ou Corneille ;

L'âme immense qu'ils ont en eux, en toi s'éveille ;

Ebloui, tu te sens le même homme qu'eux tous ;

Tu deviens en lisant grave, pensif et doux ;

Tu sens dans ton esprit tous ces grands hommes croître ;

Ils t'enseignent ainsi que l'aube éclaire un cloître ;

A mesure qu'il plonge en ton cœur plus avant,

Leur chaud rayon t'apaise et te fait plus vivant ;

Ton âme interrogée est prête à leur répondre ;

Tu te reconnais bon, puis meilleur ; tu sens fondre

Comme la neige au feu, ton orgueil, tes fureurs,

Le mal, les préjugés, les rois, les empereurs !

Car la science en l'homme arrive la première.
 Puis vient la liberté. Toute cette lumière,
 C'est à toi, comprends donc, et c'est toi qui l'éteins !
 Les buts rêvés par toi sont par le livre atteints.
 Le livre en ta pensée entre, il défait en elle
 Les liens que l'erreur à la vérité mêle,
 Car toute conscience est un nœud gordien.
 Il est ton médecin, ton guide, ton gardien.
 Ta haine, il la guérit ; ta démence, il te l'ôte.
 Voilà ce que tu perds, hélas, et par ta faute !
 Le livre est ta richesse à toi ! c'est le savoir.
 Le droit, la vérité, la vertu, le devoir,
 Le progrès, la raison dissipant tout délire.
 Et tu détruis cela, toi !

—Je ne sais pas lire."

After that, one turns with trembling hands to the epilogue, "The Old World and the Deluge."

"LE FLOT.

Tu me crois la marée et je suis le déluge."

Verily ; and as yet no Dove appears to betoken the subsidence of the waters !

Here must cease my sketch of this unique poem. I have left myself little space for comment. It has all the merits, as well as all the faults, of the writer's style. Poor and unwearied in metaphor (observe, for example, the reiterated use of Night and Morning, Light and Darkness, the Abyss, the Stars, and the Tide) ; sicklied o'er with pet names, such as *Æschylus*, *Cain*, *Cyrus*, *Gengis*, *Timour* ; tautological in ideas, and theatrical in manner ; thin to attenuation in much of its philosophical matter, it is still in no sense disappointing, though in every sense below the high level of the writer at his best. It is first-class political verse, that is all. With all this, its passion, its music, its veracity, its continued heat of personal emotion, keep us ever reminded of the fact that we are in the presence of a man who in nobility of nature has no superior, in gloomy magnificence of imagery no rival, and in sheer spontaneous poetic eloquence certainly no equal.

S. S.

SMALL MERCIES.

THERE was once an old woman, who, in answer to a visiting almoner's inquiries as to how she did, said, "Oh, sir, the Lord is very good to me,—I've lost my husband, and my eldest son, and my youngest daughter, and I'm half blind, and I can't sleep or move about for the rheumatics; but I've got two teeth left in my head, and, praise and bless His holy name, they're opposite each other!" Now it has been said that this old woman was thankful for small mercies; but when I use the phrase, I am thinking of what we can do for ourselves or each other, and not of what is done for us in the way of a Dutchman's breeches-piece of blue in a whole firmament of blackness. It is curious to note how many ways of making things pleasant are missed in this weary world. We are too idle, or too inattentive, or too dull of wit, or too ignorant,—it is usually a little of all these elements,—to take up the hundreds of small resources which surround us for smoothing the wheels of life. A tradesman once said to me, "You would be surprised, sir, to know how very few people find out the really useful, nice things. This now, which you have ordered," referring to a certain article which saved time and trouble in a certain way on which I shall not be more specific, "it is a very nice thing; but I have not been asked for it once, since I had the stock in. I have tried it in my own family; so I know."

The tradesman was correct; but to what he said I beg to make a customer's addition. It is that it is not always easy to induce tradesmen to get in novelties. They know how difficult it is to push them, whatever may be their merits, and so they hang back, afraid of dead stock. Still a great deal may be done by perseverance in asking for things. The first time a tradesman probably says, "We don't keep it, ma'am." The second time he wakes up a bit, and says, hesitatingly, "We have none in stock, ma'am." The third time he will perhaps say, "No, ma'am; but we expect some in to-morrow." And as it does sometimes happen that a useful article will "take" at once, a housewife may, by this kind of perseverance, do her neighbours a service.

The poor, harassed tradesman drops accidentally into the page. I was thinking, rather widely, of the indifference of the generality of men and women—especially women—to the adoption of easy resources of comfort and alleviation within every one's reach. I remember the surprise of a very innocent country cousin at the peremptory injunctions she used to see in London shop-windows, to "Cough No More."

And well she might, for there are coughs which nothing will cure. But there are small evils which are almost always curable; the means of cure being within any one's reach; and yet which people go on enduring. To take an instance at random. A gentleman once apologised to me for treading on my foot as he got into an omnibus. "I hope I didn't hurt your corns, sir?" said he jocosely. But I replied, with virtuous and I think just indignation, "I never have corns." A thrill of suppressed displeasure went round that omnibus! "Who is that? Why shouldn't he have corns, like the rest of us?" was the sentiment that throbbed in those offended bosoms. But the question I ask is, why should any one submit to having corns? They cause pain, they make a healthy exercise inconvenient, they disfigure the foot, being, in their degree, as painful to the eye and to the consciousness as hump backs or wens; and in this way they degrade life. Now nothing is more easy, as a general thing, than to avoid corns in the first place, or to cure them in the second. I had one once, and one only. On former occasions I had become instantly aware of the danger when it impended, and had taken vigorous preventive measures, which were successful. Once, at a time of great fatigue and worry, followed by much walking over shingly ground, I did get a real, painful corn. But what unceasingly astonishes me is that people should submit to petty degradations of this kind. If they will only read, or ask doctors, or look about them, they will soon find out how to get rid of corns. As soon as I knew I had this hateful intruder, I got some nitric acid and spent half a day in getting rid of him. Then I took proper precautions, and, though he has made attempts to return, he has always been kicked out at the entry. From such other knowledge as I have of well-kept feet, I am certain that corns may almost always be kept away or cured. There are feet in which they have never even threatened to appear—but then the owners of such feet have taken care of them. There is a story that Madame de Pompadour, or some lady of that order, made a bet that she would compel King Louis to kiss her feet. She did. In the dress of a peasant girl, with a butter-basket on her arm, and with her naked pink-white "tots" in *sabots*, she waylaid his Majesty—who was very soon on his knees to kiss the "tots." No doubt it is understood that any *lady* would keep her feet as tenderly as Madame de Pompadour kept hers. But it is not done; and even school girls will talk of corns, as if they were necessary evils.

Too much upon this particular point. To pass to matters of a totally different order. One great enemy of comfort and excluder of small pleasures, which, added up together go a long way, is routine. "Chops and tomato sauce!" Just so. It was only yesterday that I saw, in a shop-window bottles labelled, "Tomato sauce—good with chops." Now tomato *is* good with chops—but why with chops *only*? It would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to say. And anybody who

will make a few experiments will find that he may get both pleasure and use out of the tomato in dishes totally unprecedented perhaps, but quite as good in their way as that which Mr. Pickwick ordered and Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz dwelt upon. Indeed, in the whole subject of cookery and *pairing* articles of food there is room for endless innovation. I speak what I know, having innovated with success in such matters. Routine murders half our nice chances.

The reference to the uses of the tomato, apart from its pleasantness, reminds me of a class of small mercies which, though of course adopted with gratitude by sensible people, is, on the whole, most ungratefully ignored. I mean, the elegant preparations of physic which are so peculiarly useful where there are children. These are so numerous and so various that it may be pronounced nothing short of disgraceful to any household presided over by intelligent parents that children should be teased with nauseous drugs. Indeed, these pleasant, trouble-saving preparations are not such *small* mercies as they may appear, because they make it easy to administer the little corrective when it is wanted; whereas, when unpleasant means are used, the thing is apt to get put off, and then comes—the doctor.

The extent to which some of the arduous passages of civilised life are helped by small mercies in the way of inventions of comfort and convenience is a commonplace. But numbers of those inventions, even when patented and produced, die out of sight for want of encouragement. And even as to those that are used, there is a great indisposition on the part of nine people out of ten to take just the degree of trouble which puts the small mercies in their proper place. I will put the case of late and long-continuing work at an office, where the means of harmless refreshment are not at hand. Fellows will go on, with aching heads and flagging energies, doing their work about half as well, and *half as fast*, as it might be done if they were in better condition; when, with the help of some of the small mercies invention has placed at our disposal for almost nothing, tea or coffee or soup may be made in five minutes, and half a dozen weary workers refreshed. Then they go on with kindlier feelings and renewed vigour, and the time “lost” in preparing the refreshment proves time gained; for the work is done both better and quicker. It will be seen that I am thinking of cases where the adoption of the small mercies involves a little trouble. This,—the trouble,—is what I find people usually stick at. But, when they would really like what the small mercies would help them to, would be the better for it, and would be helped in doing their duty, there is a certain baseness in this flinching from “trouble.” A man has of course a perfect right to say the trouble is greater than the use or pleasure; but I have never yet noticed that those who do say this are at all unwilling to accept the use and the pleasure too when somebody else has taken the trouble.

Here, indeed, one might go oft into a discourse on that (as a German might say), so-usual lack of "gumption," which teaches how to abbreviate trouble, and *fill up the gaps* in one's little pleasures. The last point is a very large one, but difficult to "fix." We will take an instance. Perhaps you are fond of walking, and now and then you like to break the routine of your life by taking the train with your wife, sister, sweetheart, or other friend, and rambling about in sweet, lonely, country spots. When the dusk comes on, you want a cup of tea, and you like it good. But where are you to get it? I never in all my life, save in the houses of friends, and not always there, had a good cup of tea, except under my own roof, or at some hotel or other place where I was staying, and made it myself. In all London, at this moment, I do not know where I can get a cup of tea on a sudden; good coffee at two or three places, but never tea. There is a certain country inn, which calls itself an hotel, where I have often had a most enjoyable mid-day meal, everything of the best, and where I have had what they call "tea." But this is uniformly horrible. Now, I can't answer for your feelings, but I know my own; and I know that when I have been out nutting, or gathering wild-flowers, or simply enjoying the country with a companion, and when, rather tired at dusk, we go, as we should by choice, into an old-fashioned little place with a rafter roof and a slenderly carpeted floor, and a magpie chattering in a ramshackle garden outside the queer old casement,—I say my feelings forbid my wounding those of the old dame, who answers the bell, by telling her I will make my own tea. But am I therefore stranded high and dry, and forced to drink the "husband's tea" that old dame brings in with the ham and dear, sweet, fresh butter? I would have you know the contrary. We have a screw of our own raw material about us, and we put that into the pot, and rejoice over a good cup of tea, with our legs up and our hearts refreshed. I have such simple-hearted confidence in the stupidity of Mr. Carlyle's "most people," that I feel satisfied the added tea-leaves are not noticed after I have gone. Yet I once did fancy—not a hundred miles from Dorking—that the *odour* of the tea we had added got up the nostrils of a certain attendant damsel, and puzzled her. But the fact is, that when I have mentioned little devices of this kind (I have several of them for country rambles) to some people they have been almost startled with the profound ingenuity of the tricks, simple as they are!

One of the nuisances of daily life is the noise occasioned by the slamming of doors. Yet how few, comparatively speaking, avail themselves of the cheap india-rubber appliances which remove this or reduce it to a minimum.

The objection to taking trouble at first is inveterately strong, or else there is a "wrinkle" for *lightening* labour in the long run, and very greatly smoothing life which would be general, instead of extremely rare. I mean, the use of short-hand for purposes of

correspondence. How many things go unsaid in our letters for want of time and strength—things which really ought to be said, I mean,—words of kindness or of guidance ; or *pleasant* words which would bring a smile to the worn face ! Now let it be noted that short-hand writing is, *at the lowest*, from four to six times as rapid as common cursive writing, and can also be read more quickly—(by any one practised in it)—and that it need not take any one a degree of trouble worth speaking of, to learn this useful little art ; and how irritating it may well be to those who can use it not to be able to apply it extensively in correspondence. Yet, out of a certain round, I do not know two persons to whom I can write in short-hand. And all I can say is that every correspondent of mine who can't read short-hand loses by it ; for, otherwise, I should rarely write a letter without a merry anecdote or two ; or half-a-dozen,—or a dozen. So strong is my feeling on this subject that, supposing three different systems of short-hand were in use among my correspondents, I would even now think of undergoing the labour of learning all three for the sake of the consequent pleasure.

There are other matters of a similar kind in which our adoption of certain small mercies of contrivance, ready to our hand or easy to be thought of, would greatly help our lives ; would, in particular, make us less dependent on the dressmaker, the tailor, the domestic servant, and the “working-man.” But it is of no use. People *won't* take trouble—the trouble of thinking, or the trouble of crossing a room. I am sorry for them, for they thus miss a great deal of the pleasure that is enjoyed by

ONE WHO IS THANKFUL FOR SMALL MERCIES.

JOHN MARDON, MARINER :

HIS STRANGE ADVENTURES IN EL DORADO.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ST. ABE AND HIS SEVEN WIVES."

CONCLUSION.

THENCE, forward-faring, fortified
By that deep draught of Peace,
Thro' grassie Table-lands we hied,
Where naked Shepherds, gentle-eyed,
Wash'd white the woolly Fleece
In golden Streames ; and lo ! one Morn
We saw new Mountains rise,
And in the midst a Peak forlorn,
Snow-white on purple Skies ;
Around about the Mountains' feet
The Air was rich, the Grass was sweet,
And scented Shrubs there grew ;
Yea, Song-birds sang in the great heat ;
And to the song our Hearts did beat,
And our glad Thoughts grew newe.

But swiftlie (even as men that leap
Into a still and dreamless deepe)
Amid the Mountains' Shade
We plunged refresh'd ; and Steep by Steep,
Terrace by Terrace, we did creep
Upward, still unafraid.
And as we reach'd each dizzy ledge,
And saw each Prospect strange,
By Torrents riven and black Gulfs' edge
The Flowers and Shrubs did change :
Paler and smaller still they grew,
As upward still rose we,
Till wan they were and weak of hue,
As weary Weedlings that bestrewe
The Shores o' the Frozen Sea.
And now our breath was drawn in paine,
While sharp as needles thro' the Braine
Ran the thin chillie air ;
And our fierce mirth began to wane,

And silentlie we sought (in vaine)
To toil away our care.
Above us on the Mountain's brow
A Wild Wind flap't its wings ; and now
All blacken'd to the night,
Like to an Ethiop's face ; and lo !
The dark mists grew, the winds wail'd woe,
And strange birds shriek'd affright.
Thrice have I driven round Cape Horne
With shatter'd Bulwarks and Shroudes torne,
But ne'er before, I wis,
Had I been driven, night or morn,
Thro' such a Storm as this !
Sight, Hearing, Speech, were choked and drown'd
In the black rush of wind.
We clung together with no sound,
We clutch'd and clung, heads whirling round,
Mad, gasping, sick, and blind.
In the chill breath the Tempest cast,
Our hair froze and our teeth set fast ;
But now and then we saw aghast
The Whirlwind raise its wings,
Showing the Gulfs whereby we past—
The air-hung Heights where Crosses vast,
Deep-rooted, struggled in the blast,
And shriek'd like human things !

Yea, further, shuddering we descried
Dark traces of the Dead :
The Mule and Rider side by side,
In the Crag's shelter where they died,
Their white-bleach'd bones bespread,
And mournfullie the Condor cried,
Hovering overhead.

The Blastes went by, with lulls between
Of crystal air and weak,
When far above our Path was seen,
Snow-white against the azure sheen,
The glimmering frozen Peak !

Not *thither* clomb we ; but we crept
Around the cold Peak's base of stone,

JOHN MARDON, MARINER.

Past the fierce Circles tempest-swept,
 Beyond the Paths where Whirlwinds groan,
 And creeping to a Vale below,
 Screen'd from all Rains and Winds that blow,
 We rested with their moan.
 For far above us, where the Wind
 Still howl'd around those pathways blind,
 Our great-boned Steede lay dead ;
 And we were footsore, faint, and frail,
 Driven forth like Storm-wrack from the gale,
 God's curse upon our head !
 'Twas night. Behind rose, cold and dire,
 Peaks where eternal Frost doth dwell ;
 But far before us, Smoke and Fire
 Belch'd, like the Mouth of Hell.

That night *I* prayed, who had not prayed
 For many a year before that night ;
 Push'd from my breast the shivering Maide,
 While Vascar, fainting and afraid,
 Shriek'd at the far-off Light.
 And when Dawn came, we saw a land
 Most desolate, alas !
 All livid rock, with Ashes and Sand
 Instead of Flowers and Grass,
 Blighted and wither'd, burnt and bann'd,
 Scorch'd by the touch of God's red Hand—
 Ashes and Sand, Ashes and Sand,
 And Stones of mighty Mass.
 Then Guayi sprung up eagerlie,
 Pointing ; and lo ! with haggard eyes
 We saw, as shipwreck'd men might see,
 A Mountain black as Ebony,
 Alone in the sad Skies.

O God, it was a solemn sight !
 I shake as Memory burns it back !
 Behind, that Peak of Spotless White,
 Beyond, that Peak of Black :
 Like two vast angels, one of Light
 And one of Darkness, on the sight
 Their mighty shapes they raised,
 One clad with Dawn, one capp'd with Night,
 They on each other gazed !

Then my Soul sicken'd, tho' I knew
The Place was nigh ; for God's cold Ban
Seem'd with us ; and no green thing grew
Upon the Path we did pursue,
But Sand and Ashes wan.
All was burnt up with fire from Hell !
No Tree, no Shrub ; no living one ;
No Beast, no Bird ; no Thing to tell
Of Sunlight, and no Sun ;
Only the dim and lowering glare
Of that black Angel standing there,
Only the soot-flakes in the air,
Instead of the sweet Dew !
Only Death's silence everywhere.
But far behind us, bright and bare,
The Snowy-Angel, deathly fair
Against its own cold Blue.

Pass on ! Pass o'er ! 'Tis as a dream,
Horrible, wild, remember'd ill.
Thro' Sand and Ashes my soul doth seem
Toiling and struggling still.
I see the face of Ala grow
Thinner and wanner as we go,
I see her large eyes shine.
I grow to loathe her for the woe
Her Soul hath shed on mine.
Before us flies the Ghost her Sire,
Behind, the spent Priest groans.
Night. Roof'd with Smoke and crimson Fire,
We rest our burning bones.

The next day Dread as deepe as Death
Falls on us ; Dread and dark Surprise ;
For the fierce Sulphur fills our breath,
The black Smoke fills our eyes.
And Vascar shrieks, and one by one
Calls on his many Saints, but none
Make answer to his cries.
When suddenly before our track
We see a Torrent flash,
Around that Mountain's base jet-black,
Drawn in one livid gash ;
And Guayi calls in his own tongue,

JOHN MARDON, MARINER.

"Be of good cheer—behold the place!"
 And his eye kindles and grows young,
 And fiery Hunger lights his face.
 Then in that moment's glistening Greede
 All is forgotten, and with speede,
 With Eyes that burn and Hearts that bleede,
 We follow our swift Guide.
 I turn to Ala smilingie,
 She brightens, smiles, and springs to me,
 I kiss her, clasp her, in mad glee
 We follow, side by side.

Dismal as Death, before our Eyes,
 A mighty Cliff block'd up our path,
 Seam'd by the Torrent, that with cries
 And flake o' foam leapt from the Skies
 In pallid rage and wrath.
 But down below where now we stood,
 Like a tamed beast without a sound,
 In one vast pool the slumbering Flood
 Whirl'd softly round and round.
 On the dark crags to left and right
 The Condors perch'd stone-still,
 Illumed phantasmie every night
 By fierce reflections from the light
 Of the far-flaming Hill.

Then round the pool with soft footfall
 Stole Guayi, till he took his stand
 Close to the flashing of the Fall,
 With lean uplifted hand,
 And bent his frame and bow'd his head,
 And like a Bird on stormy ways,
 Plunged at the waters, struggled, fled,
 And vanish'd from our gaze!

We cried, we shook, but Ala set
 Her finger on her lips; and lo!
 Forth flash'd the Phantom, dripping wet,
 Out of the Torrent's Snow,
 And beckon'd!—Lightly as a Bird
 Fled Ala, silent; for no word
 Could in that roar of Floods be heard,

Though Man should shriek till sore.
She led, I follow'd, and behind
Came Vascar ; tottering, dumb and blind,
We join'd the Sire, and swift as wind
 He leapt and plunged once more.
Then, smiling, flashing, like a dove,
With one glad kiss of burning love,
Ala bow'd down her limbs, and clove
 The flood with arm-sweep brave.
She led, we follow'd ; dizzy, drown'd,
One moment surged we, then we found
Strong fingers clutch us round and round,
 And drag us from the grave—
And firm we stood on solid ground
 Within a mightie Cave . . .

Dark, black, as Death, and faintly fed
With sick sad air fit for things dead,
Its Mouth closed up and curtain'd
 By the pale Torrent's base ;
Sad, silent, shivering, cold with dread
We waited. Suddenly was shed
A flickering Ray of flaming red
 Around the clammie place.
'Twas Guayi, and he gript a torch
 Of resinous dreadful glare,
And (like a fiend Hell's Cinders scorch)
 Loom'd in the midnight air ;
And we were conscious of strange things,
Quick slimy Worms, and Shapes with wings,
 Awakening unaware,
Struck from their slimie slumberings
 By the fierce Torch's Flare.

Then . . . we grew mad ; for by that light
The Treasure rose upon our sight ;
Tho' mildewed, slimy, black as night,
 Worth a King's wealth thrice told !
Yea, Bars of price, and Urns abrim
With Gems and Rings bestain'd and dim ;
Yea Golden Idols—Head, Trunk, Limb—
 One blacken'd Mass of Gold—
Ingots and Gems and Rings and Bars,
Yea Sapphires, numberless as Stars,

And Rubies manifold !
 And there beside the Hoard divine
 Were Torches laid, and Gourds of Wine
 Hundreds of summers old.
 Nay further, 'mid the Treasure set
 A Heathen God with locks of jet,
 And round his neck an Amulet
 Of glistening Pearls of price ;
 And for his Eyes were crimson Stones,
 Worth laden Ships in plenteous Zones,
 And round his seat dead bleachen Bones
 Were scatter'd cold as Ice.
 A Woman with the large soft eyes !
 So like to Hers ! as mild, as good !
 The rest for woman's weary sighs,
 And man's deep curse, is food !
 That night I tell thee, our strange Guide,
 Old Guayi, shrivell'd up and died
 Without one warning word :
 Some fierce disease of his black Flock
 Had struck him, rent him as a rock,
 And there he lay, nor stirr'd.
 And Ala with a wild desire
 Bent o'er the body of her Sire,
 Calling his name with tears of fire,
 Moaning to Gods unknown.
 And the Cave echoed back her cry,
 And dark things flapt and flitted by,
 And the black Idol made reply,
 But in no human tone.

Alack, that night ! I soothed her fears,
 I kiss'd her, led her from the place,
 Outside the Cavern, with no tears
 She sat and prayed with shining face ;
 I drew her fondly to my breast,
 I soothed her spirit into rest,
 And in mine arms as in a nest
 She slept a little space . . .
 Bright in my brain like sparks of flame
 The wild thoughts throbb'd and rose and came,
 And changed and would not cease ;
 For tho' my watchful eyes were set
 Hungrie upon the Cavern, yet
 My Soul had little Peace.

And Vascar ? By our side he crouch'd,
Blinking his eyne like a strange beast,
Strange, still, and subtle, with lips pouch'd,
And flickering smile that seldom ceased ;
And once he whisper'd to me slow,
" One dead ! one less ! " and laugh'd full low,
And in his features seem'd to show
A vacant Mind and wild—
His wits seem'd worn and wandering weak,
His Eyes looked hueless, and his Cheek
Did twitch whenever he did speak,
And evermore he smiled.

'Twas night. We slept. Stretch'd there full sound,
In the warm air, on the warm ground,
And ere I slept the Maide had wound
Her arms about me tight . . .
I dream'd of Gold . . . I revel kept
In golden Hoards . . . when as I slept
A shrill Cry woke me, and I leapt
Up in a fierce affright.
I was alone . . . the Maide was fled . . .
I heard no Voice, no human Tread . . .
I call'd aloud . . . nought answer'd . . .
And softly breathed the Night . . .
When lo ! before me ere I knew,
His face and cheeks of ghastlie hue,
Priest Vascar smiling stood,
And waved aloft against the Blue
A bright Blade dripping Blood.
Yea, on the Face I watch'd aghast,
Heark'ning the words he said,
The Fiend of the Volcano cast
Strange radiance fiery-red.

" Courage ! " he cried, with pale blue eyne,
Gleaming full vacantlie on mine,
" Courage ! for now 'tis done—
No living mouth can hence breathe forth
To Priest or Paramour on Earth
The secret we have won ! "
I gazed upon him silentlie,
Soul-sick and dumb, and I could see
His evil wits were gone !

Yet as a Wild Beast springs I sprang
 To grip him, but with laugh that rang
 He plunged into the Cave.
 I would have follow'd fierce and fleet,
 But something clung around my feet,
 Like cold Hands from the grave !
 I stoop'd, I listen'd, and, O God !
 I sicken'd as I gazed—
 'Twas Ala—bleeding on the sod—
 With her large eyes upraised.

O dark-skinn'd Lamb ! O gentle Dove !
 She smiled in Death, smiled as she bled.
 Her luminous eyes were large with Love.
 She clasp'd me close, and kiss'd, and said
 Such words as said again might move
 A spirit in things Dead !
 She named her Gods by names most mild,
 And blest me by them ! Sweet slain Childe !
 And last (as flames a burnt-out Brand)
 Just at the end, with quick sharp cry,
 She rose a space, with one dark hand,
 Even as a flame-point, held on high,
 Calling her Gods ; then on the sand
 Sank slowly, and did dye !

Then . . . mark me ! for by Heaven I swear
 These dreadful things have been !—
 That instant thro' the dreadful air
 The Fire-Fiend, with flaming hair,
 Smiled lurid on the Scene.
 And swift as Death the hollow Ground
 Shook to still subterranean Sound,
 Shook, shriek'd, was riven, and all around
 The great Crag's chatter'd like teeth !
 As if the Judgment Hour were near,
 Earth, Heaven, and Air did quake for fear,
 And there was Darkness deep and drear,
 Above, around, beneath.
 I lay and waited for Death's blow,
 And tried to pray, but swoon'd for dread ;
 And when I stirr'd, and waken'd, lo !
 I saw the Cavern, crimson-red,
 Torn open like a Mouth ; and there,

Amid the centre of the glare,
 One moment, stood the Priest ;—
 Girt by the Gold I saw him sink,
 Shrieking upon the Earthquake's brink,
 . . . And with his shriek, I ceased.

* * * * *

Snow ? Is that Snow ?
 Is that the falling Snow
 All round me as I lie ?
 Are those the Christmas bells I hear,
 A-ringing round me loud and clear
 Under the English Skye ?
 Is this the falling Snow
 In a Village that I know ?
 I see the children come and go
 With Hollic-berries red ;
 I see them thro' the frosty pane ;
 I see the white Church with its vane ;
 I hear the Church-bells plain ;
 I hear them from my bed.

Who holds me ? Hush ! Still ! . . . 'Twas a Dreame !
 I slept ; my Soul was far away ;
 So sweet was all, and I did seeme
 In England, and 'twas Christ His Day.
 Againe I wake to the wild Gleame
 That on my burning Brow doth streame
 And round my sick Soul play.

How God from out that dreadful Land
 Did pluck me living with his Hand
 I know not, but 'twas so !
 I lived ; but now I die ; my Sand
 Is running Deathlie low.

White Mary with the drooping eyes !
 San Joseph with the hoary hair !
 Keep greene one spot beneath the skies,
 Tho' I may never wander there ;
 O keep old England bright and faire !

For this strange Land that round me lies,
Where the bright Gold-gleame never dies,
Is treacherous, sick with care.
Yea, all is deathlie and not good,
Death crawls on Mountain and in Wood,
Death lurks beneath the smiling Flood,
And crawls in every Flower ;
And here are Snakes and Snake-like Men ;
And blacklie ever and again
Old Earthquake, crawling from her Den,
Doth wither and Devour.
The golden Gleam ! the gleaming Gold !
All treacherously bright !
My Sand is run, my Tale is told,
The Skeleton with touch so cold
Shakes hands with me this night.
O lay me downe beside the Sea,
And bid them when they bury me,
Above my Bones unblest
Write thus : "*John Mardon, Marinere,*
A sinful Englishman, lies here ;
God give his dark Soul Rest !"

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN IRRECONCILEABLE.

VI.

THE present batch of notes must begin with the correction of an error of the press at line 29, page 329, of the last number of this magazine. The thirty-five should have been twenty-five. It was of course impossible for me to escape the political excitements of 1848—9; and I rather think my very first printed writings which—such as they were—were political, saw the light—such as it was—before I was quite thirty. But those matters will keep. I will go back to two or three years old. In connection with that date matters arise which can hardly be without interest to parents and teachers as well as to psychologists.

I closed the last set of Notes by saying that though there might be small errors in my reminiscences, they would always be representatively true. To thoughtful persons this will have suggested two points which were uppermost in my mind at the time I made that statement.

Perhaps the reader has been struck by finding that in certain cases where he has *fancied* he remembered with verbal accuracy what somebody had written, he has in fact altered the phraseology. He may have even altered for the better, and his recollection of the sense may have been perfectly exact; but there *is* an alteration. We are now excluding the case of a thing which we *know* we got by heart at a given time, and also the case where, if challenged, we should at once feel safe in declaring that we had the exact language. But the fact remains, that it sometimes happens that when we have a pretty strong impression that our memory of words is exact, we find it otherwise; and we do occasionally find that we have improved upon our original. It may be observed in passing that we usually remember with perfect accuracy, when we remember it at all, any passage in a foreign language. When we make an error, there is usually a simple reason for it. For example, when we say *à l'outrance*, which is wrong, the right French being *à outrance*, we are partly misled by feeling the awkwardness of the two broad vowel sounds together, and partly by the idiom which prefixes the definite article in such phrases as *à la mode*. Again when we say erroneously *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, (which should be *supra*) we are misled by reflecting back, as it were, the English rendering ("beyond") upon the original.

But to return to the main track from which we have thus not idly diverged. Something analogous to what happens with our recollec-

tions of words happens also with our recollections of things—we occasionally transpose, alter, *select*, heighten or lower, and yet we are substantially right. It is a pity this was not remembered by some of the minute correctors of the early recollections of Mr. Dickens. All their attempts to dilute his strong language were thrown away upon the critical understanding, and Dickens remained, as he ought, master of the field. The recollections of a man like Dickens might well look exaggerated by the side of the recollections of the intelligent and veracious Jones applied to the same topics. But in the first place we must judge a picture by Dickens *as in its proper place in Dickens's own picture-gallery*, not side by side with sketches by Jones. Of course the colour and movement in the one picture will be as the sun to a rushlight. But what then? The very condition of the Dickens power is the selective instinct, and if his picture is representatively true, —if he paints his childhood in his recollections as it affects *him*,—we infer that his childhood stood in such and such relations to the rest of his life, and we are instructed accordingly. It does not matter that he lived at No. 9, when he says he lived at No. 29; nor that a shop which he calls dirty was swept twice a day. The case of Lowood School is in point again. We sympathised with the friends of a certain clergyman, but Charlotte Brontë remained mistress of the field—and so she ought. We receive a picture by Charlotte Brontë with an instinctively felt relation to her own glowing colours in other cases,—not to the pale, ineffective, and essentially false though “remarkably accurate” sketches of the intelligent Jones.

But another and more difficult point arises, in relation to all autobiography in proportion as it becomes psychological. It is this. We have all some tendency to read back into the text of our past lives matter which is in reality the comment of later years. Men have been known to put gratuitous bad motives into their own past conduct! And, no doubt, gratuitous good ones. How can any one be sure he is not reading back in this way when he speaks in middle life of his own experiences as a child?

And here I refer myself to two principal points. First, the desire to get at the exact truth, if only as a matter of speculative interest; and secondly to the safety which lies in continuous backward joinings on. The reader knows what the “block system” is in railway working. Well, turn your negative into a positive and you have what I mean. If, say, I am certain that I remember accurately at forty *what* I remembered at thirty *about* what happened at twenty, and so on backwards, I have reason to be sure of my game.

But perhaps I can illustrate this still farther, and make headway at the same time.

I have very often found it difficult to avoid offending people with the high positiveness of my recollections, when opposed to theirs.

"Why may not you be mistaken as well as other people? Perhaps you forget,—you can't tell." Of course it carries no conviction to reply, "Yes; but I *can* tell, and I am quite sure." And whether a given person's recollection is usually correct or not in the teeth of contradiction can only be known to his intimates. But let me try and explain the process of "thinking back" a little more closely. And here I think the question becomes interesting to all teachers, especially of the young.

I have had, in my time, to copy many weary thousands of folios of law documents. Everybody knows the *general* sameness of phraseology which runs through such documents: general sameness, in addition to the frequent recurrence of such starting-points as AND WHEREAS; or AND RECITING. Just listen to this:—"THIS INDENTURE made the blank day of blank in the year of our Lord blank between James Christian Clement Bell of Angel Court Throgmorton Street in the City of London and of Eltham in the county of Kent, Esquire, of the one part, and &c. &c." Alas! I am drawing on very remote memory for this, and also for this:—"NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in consideration of the premises and also of five shillings of good and lawful money of Great Britain by him the said James Etheridge McCausland paid to the said William Thurkettle at or before the execution of these presents, he the said James Etheridge McCausland DOTH hereby, for himself, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, and all persons whomsoever included," &c., &c. (I can see McCausland now, and his two daughters, especially the daughters.) This is the sort of thing of which law writings consist. Now, in lawyers' offices, and public offices connected with law courts and the like, copies are systematically examined with originals; a senior clerk holding the original, and a junior reading the copy aloud. In the case of a deed special care is taken at "the witnessing part." How many times have I heard the words, "Now then, look sharp, this is the witnessing part"; i.e., the verb active, so to speak, of the deed! And I was in special request as a reader, on account of the extreme rapidity I could throw into my utterance—a rapidity which, after a great many years' experience, I have never seen more than approached. But I always grudged the trouble of "the examining" of copies made by myself, because I was perfectly sure they were correct; and whenever I could dodge that trouble I did. Only, how did I know that in copying "This Indenture Witnesseth that for and in consideration" &c., &c., I had made no mistake? Because I had given my mind to being correct, and when I had done the *now* I went on to the *this*; and then, being perfectly sure I had written *Now this*, I went on to *Indenture*; and so on, word by word, upon the block system. Now, of course, for purposes of business this process must be carried on with extreme rapidity; and to that rapidity I was always, without an effort, consciously equal. So that, though I

have sent through my fingers thousands of folios of deeds, pleadings, and the like, which I never had "examined," I am perfectly certain that these copies never contained a mistake. It does not follow that I was never on the point of making one; but only that an infallible self-consciousness arrested my pen at the right moment, so that my assurance of my own being does not exceed my assurance that *when* I resolved to be perfectly correct I always was so.

Now observe how this works. You may take eleven copyists who will assure you that their work contains no error. You shall examine the work of the whole eleven against the originals, and find that each one does contain errors. But you shall examine mine, the twelfth on the list, and never, out of any number of experiments, discover a mistake. The reader will kindly bear in mind that I am speaking only of a quasi-mechanical process in which I had set myself the task of working on the block system. But it is not in my experience of the fact that I never was convicted of a mistake in such work that I find my own certainty of the accuracy of the work,—it is in my continuous consciousness, back, and back, and back, that each step in the path was duly trodden. I am as sure that I wrote *this* as I am that I wrote *now*, and as sure that I wrote *indenture* as I am that I wrote *this*. But how can I convey my own certainty to another person's mind? Obviously, nohow. It is incommunicable.

Much of the certainty that I rely upon in writing these Notes is of a similar kind. Incommunicable, but absolute.

VII.

It has already been mentioned that my parents used to say I could read little words when I was two years old. But to this I must now add that my mother told me it was a long while before she could get me to form any idea of spelling, though *after* that my progress was so rapid that at four years old I could read as well as I could at twenty (—barring of course particular strange words). There was, probably, as we shall see, a misreading of the facts on my mother's part; but that she was correct on the whole as to my reading I know pretty surely by corroboratory matters which may now be mentioned. First, I remember urging my mother to buy some periwinkles (Oh, ye Muses!) of a man who distinguished himself by always saying periwinkles, not pennywinkles, and this at a time when I know, by other circumstances, I was not more than three, if that. Second, I remember, when I was somewhere on the younger side of five, being asked by a minister to spell Christmas for sixpence, and bursting out crying at what I considered an insult, my mother assuring the good man, amidst her laughter, that I could read the 12th chapter of Nehemiah to him if he liked. Third, I had taught myself to write, after a fashion,—that is, in a kind of cursive small print,—long before I was

five. Fourth, *I used to "read" a great many words that I could not or did not spell, including words not English.*

And at this point, the story has an "educational" interest for every reader.

But, before passing on, I must pause in wonder and awe, to ask myself, in the name of us all, where in all my recollections of my life as a child, where is the *child* gone to? I do not, cannot, in the least recall him.

That I was a real child, though a meditative and ingenious one, I know. I can remember toys, sweets, cakes, childish ailments, and such caresses as only children get. I am sure that grown-up people often laughed at me for naïveté in reply. I am sure that I was in some respects more simple even than most children; that is to say I was very easily imposed upon and was frequently hoaxed. For me, at that age, miracles were not passed. I was prepared to see angels in the common thoroughfares, and to find myself walking on the waves. But the special simplicity of childhood is another and very different thing. Whither has that gone out of my recollection? I remember it no more than my mother's breast.

VIII.

I am now coming to a fifth proof, from a fact surviving in my memory, that I must have known how to read well at a very early age. The point we shall come to directly is this:—how did I *mainly* learn? and then I shall ask the reader to turn to Mr. George MacDonald's delightful story of "Gutta Percha Willie."

In the yard of the little tenement in the back street near White Conduit House was a water-butt; a thing I had never seen before. Before my parents had settled down in the new place, and while my mother was looking about her, I got alone into the back yard. The water-butt was, for some reason, tilted, and it had a good deal of water in it. I drew the tall chair, on which I sat at table, to this water-butt, climbed up, and from a natural feeling of curiosity, tried to look inside the water-butt. Now I did not understand the laws of matter and motion, and pulled it down over me. I was not much hurt, but of course I was drenched, and the yard was flooded. My mother was very angry, and I have observed that people do get angry in similar cases. But I never could understand why. What has happened may be ever so vexing, but why punish the instrument, unless it has been to blame? A child, while doing something quite lawful or even useful, and while paying reasonable attention to what it is about, breaks something. In eight cases out of ten it gets a box on the ear, a scolding, or some other punishment, though its natural mortification at having made the slip and vexed its elders is of itself a severe punishment. Now I very early set myself against this,

for I very early saw the injustice of it ; and many a "tussle" have I had in such matters with father, mother, and the rest—being invariably told, in addition to any penalty put upon me, that "young folks thought old folks to be fools, but old folks *knew* young folks to be fools." I could not, of course, at that age expose in terms the false antithesis between *think* and *know* here, but I felt it, and despised, even to bitterness and intense disgust, the sort of intelligence that could be taken in by words in that way. I know that I sometimes threw the word "fool" at my elders in ways that ended in my going without a dinner and being set to study Matt. v., ver. 22. Now on this occasion I resented my mother's rebuke, flew into a violent passion, and said I know not what. I was wet through, bruised and mortified, and could not see what wrong I had done. It was perfectly natural for me to want to examine a new object, and there was nothing in its appearance to warn me of any danger. If I did wrong, what law was it I broke? There is no such law as "Never look into water-butts," nor is it easy to frame a general rule which would include my case. I utterly fail to see that I had done anything punishable ; but it all ended in my being sent, for the first time in my life, to school till dinner-time, as a punishment. I have no doubt I said things to my mother which deserved a much severer penalty ; but what prevented my ever being treated with severity in special cases was my habitual gentleness and scrupulosity of obedience. These were so often praised in my presence that I used to hate myself. But I got abundant *dispraise* occasionally.

My going, for one morning, to a school kept by an old frump of a woman seems a small matter, but it led to one of the most vividly remembered incidents of my life, and, in some respects, one of the most inexplicable. Where I got the caressing tendency I do not know ; it was not strong in either of my parents. My mother was incredibly tender and kind if you were ill, but I have often wished for more of her hands and her lips. I have sometimes heard her call kissing "slobbering ;" and, even at times of strong excitement, a very little, in the way of embracing, satisfied her. But I have heard her say that before I could run well I used to "sweetheart" a little girl of the same age, one Fanny H——,—a very pretty girl, but with eyes too close together—to such a degree that it laid the foundation of a strong feeling that I should some day marry her. Even as late as when I was twenty, I have heard my parents say, with a degree of seriousness that I could not fathom, "Ah, you may *court* where you please, but you will *marry* Fanny H——."

However, to school I went. Looking, I suppose, only to my age and size, and without asking any questions, the old dame, having called me up, taught me my letters, pointing them out one by one with a large knitting-needle ! It was no business of mine—I had been sent to her for punishment—and I took what came. In five

minutes, I was in my seat, on a back form, looking about me and meditating.

A little girl, of whom I recollect absolutely nothing but her downy little arms and her naked neck and shoulders, sat a bench or two away from me. In some way she offended the old dame, who had been so very gentle to me—for really she had been most benignant—and so Madam, with the wooden busk of a pair of stays, which was her striking implement, hit out at the little girl. When the busk went back, there was a well-pronounced, broad red mark on the little girl's white neck. But my face must have instantly become a great deal more red. I could have made a dash at the victim there and then, smothered her with caresses, and then murdered the old woman. It was not to be. Impatiently I sat till school broke up. I felt sullen with my mother for punishing me unjustly, and did not feel bound to go home immediately. I had been sent out, and I would *keep* out. With a beating heart—ah! how well I remember the throbbing in my ears—I went up to the little girl and, I forget how, made friends with her. I took hold of her little pink hand, and we went down the street together towards the fields, and away from my home. As we passed along, I met a “gentleman” whom I had seen speaking to my father. He smiled down upon me, and said,—

“Well, my little man!”

“No, sir,” said I: “I’m *not* a man; but I’m going on to be one.”

He half laughed, and gave me a penny!

Now I had been always told not to take money, and was very shy of doing so. But I was away from home—had some sense of having been injured—and felt all the moral latitude of a belligerent. So I took the money, and bought with it two monstrous yellow bull's eyes. I felt more pleasure myself in their transparent golden brightness and the pleasing oval of their shape, than I could possibly find in their flavour, and tried hard to get my companion to take both and eat them. I would have laid all the bull's eyes in the world at her feet! She would not accept both, and sucking the bull's eyes, we walked till we came to a hedge on the margin of the pond. Then I made her sit down, and we talked. She had nothing whatever on over her low-necked frock, and, at some moment of interest in our conversation, I seized her round the waist, put my lips to the shoulder that had had the busk, and kissed it like mad. She burst out crying, and got up. I was frightened, and stood up also, trembling from head to foot. Then I became suddenly aware of that change in the sunshine which tells you it is distinctly afternoon; and I felt some remorse at staying away from my mother so long. We turned hurriedly homewards, and, at some point on the road, the little girl darted away, without warning or farewell, and left me to the blankness of my own sensations.

When I got home, I found my father with two other men (who were to be our lodgers) and in high good humour. My mother was looking black. There was some cold boiled mutton—I remember the exact veining of the white fat in it—left out for my dinner. “Well,” said my father laughing—he often laughed, to the great scandal of my mother, when I had done anything “rampagious”—“where have you been, and what did you learn at school?”

“She taught me my letters,” said I.

At this, the cloud on my mother’s brow dispersed; and she joined my father in a loud, long laugh.

“Why, he can read better than she can!” explained my father to the two guests.

Then my mother required an account of my time since school broke up, and I gave it,—omitting nothing. Now, indeed, the laughter became Homeric, or Thor-like, or what you will; and all the years I happened afterwards to know these two men I was teased about “that young woman, behind the hedge, you know.”

IX.

But how was it that I could read as well as my schoolmistress, and yet had had but little direct teaching?

The first thing I will do in going into this question, and some related matters, is to ask attention to some abbreviated passages from Mr. MacDonald’s “Gutta-Percha Willie” :—

“Hector had shown considerable surprise when he found that Willie could not read.

“What a fine thing it would be to learn to read to Hector! It would be such fun to surprise him too, by all at once reading him something!

“The sun was not at his full height when Willie received this illumination. Before the sun went down, he knew, and could read at sight, at least a dozen words.

“For the moment he saw that he ought to learn to read, he ran to his mother, and asked her to teach him. She was delighted, for she had begun to be a little doubtful whether his father’s plan of leaving him alone till he wanted to learn was the right one. But at that precise moment she was too busy with something that must be done for his father, to lay it down and begin teaching him his letters. Willie was so eager to learn, however, that he could not rest without doing something towards it. He bethought himself a little—and then ran and got Dr. Watts’s hymns for children. He knew ‘How doth the little busy bee’ so well as to be able to repeat it without a mistake, for his mother had taught it him, and he had understood it. You see he was not like a child of five, taught to repeat by rote lines which could give him no notions but mistaken ones. Besides, he had

a good knowledge of words, and could use them well in talk although he could not read ; and it is a great thing if a child can talk well before he begins to learn to read.

"He opened the little book at the Busy Bee, and knowing already enough to be able to divide the words the one from the other, he said to himself—

"The first word must be *How*. There it is, with a gap between it and the next word. I will look and see if I can find another *How* anywhere."

"He looked a long time before he found one ; for the capital H was in the way. Of course there was a good many *hows*, but not many with a big H, and he didn't know that the little *h* was just as good for the mere word. Then he looked for *doth*, and he found several *doths*. Of *thes*, he found as great a swarm as if they had been the bees themselves with which the little song was concerned. *Busy* was scarce ; I am not sure whether he found it at all ; but he looked at it until he was pretty sure he should know it again when he saw it. After he had gone over in this way every word of the first verse, he tried himself, by putting his finger at random here and there upon it and seeing whether he could tell the word it happened to touch. Sometimes he could, and sometimes he couldn't. However, as I said, before the day was over, he knew at least a dozen words perfectly well at sight.

"Nor let any one think this was other than a great step in the direction of reading ! It would be easy for Willie afterwards to break up these words into letters.

"It took him two days more—for during part of each he was learning to make shoes—to learn to know anywhere, every word he had found in that hymn.

"Next he took a hymn he had not learned and applied to his mother when he came to a word he did not know, which was very often. As soon as she told him one, he hunted about until he found another and another specimen of the same, and so went on until he had fixed it quite in his mind.

"At length he began to compare words that were like each other, and by discovering wherein they looked the same, and wherein they looked different, he learned something of the sound of the letters. For instance, in comparing *the* and *these*, although the one sound of the two letters, *t* and *h*, puzzled him, and likewise the silent *e*, he conjectured that the *s* must stand for the hissing sound ; and when he looked at other words which had that sound, and perceived an *s* in every one of them, then he was sure of it. His mother had no idea how fast he was learning, and when about a fortnight after he had begun, she was able to take him in hand, she found, to her astonishment, that he could read a great many words, but that, when she wished him to spell one, he had not the least notion what she meant."

The extreme interest of this passage must be my apology for the length of the extract. The remainder of the story is to be found in "Good Words for the Young." It will be seen that we have here glimpses of the art of learning to read without learning to spell; but Mr. MacDonald does not *disclose* (probably for good artistic reasons) that he is aware of the whole scope of that indirect criticism on educational method which is involved in Willie's method of learning to read. We will try, however, to go some little way towards developing it.

AN IRRECONCILEABLE.

(To be continued.)

THE SONG OF ALTABISKAR.

[The following lines are a version of an Euskaldung or Basque popular ballad of unascertained date, which records the mythical fight of Roncesvalles, where the peers of Charlemagne, and notably Roland and Oliver, fell; as seen from the victors' point of view. The original will be found in M. Francisque-Michel's *Le Pays Basque*, p. 236.]

AMIDST the mountains of the Basques a sudden cry sounds clear,
And rouses, by his cottage-door, the stalwart yeoman's ear.

He calls, "Who goes there—need they me?" while at his feet the
hound
Springs up from sleep, and baying loud, wakes Altabiskar round.

From Ibañeta's ridge a noise is echoing, heard on high,
And strikes the rocks to right and left as on it cometh nigh,

The sullen murmur of a host advancing through the land,
But answered by our countrymen that on the mountains stand,

Who make their signals widely heard with horn and bugle call;
The yeoman looketh to his shafts, and whets them, one and all.

They come! they come! what clumps of spears, what banners floating
free
Of many a hue rise on the view as rides their chivalry!

How bright the flashes come and go from off their coats of mail!
How many be they? Count them o'er, and tell, my child, the tale.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve,
thirteen,
Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, a score, are
seen.

A score! yes, more, and thousands o'er; 'twere wasted time to count.
Uproot we with our sinewy arms the rocks upon the mount,

And hurl them from the dizzy height down to the pass below,
To come, with death and ruin charged, upon the foreign foe.

What seek they in our mountain home, these men of Northern race?
Why come from far the peace to mar of this our native place?

When God set up these lofty hills, He meant to bar man's way:
And now the whirling boulders fall, and bruise, and crush, and slay.

Blood streameth free where they have struck; flesh quivers where
they tore;
What shattered bones lie 'neath the stones,—in what a sea of gore!

Escape, escape, all ye to whom remaineth strength or steed;
With thy black plumes, King Carloman, flee in thy scarlet weed:

Thy well-loved nephew, Roland wight, is stretched amidst the slain:
Small help his strength in this day's fight, his prowess little gain.

And now, ye Basques, leave we the rocks, and speed we down below,
And send our arrows whizzing fast to overtake the foe.

They flee! they flee! Who now may see that hedge of lances keen?
Those banners, too, of many a hue that flaunting late were seen?

The flashing ray no more will play on armour soiled with gore.
How many be they? Count, my child, and tell their number o'er.

A score, nineteen, eighteen, seventeen, sixteen, fifteen, fourteen,
Thirteen, twelve, eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three,
two, one is seen.

One? Nay, not one; too well is done the work we had to do,
Thou, yeoman, with thy hound, mayst seek thy cottage-door anew;

Clasp close thy wife and little ones; lay by thy shafts and horn;
And stretch thee down, and sleep in peace till dawns again the morn.

With night the eagle flocks will come that mangled flesh to tear,
And evermore our foemen's bones shall whiten in the air!

SENLAC.

FILIPPO, PAINTER.

I.

THE Piazza Madama is little known or noticed by strangers in Rome. It leads into the Piazza Navona, where Bernini has been, with his coarse mould and chisel; and where behind him he has left his monstrous brood. Poor water! with the sacred Tiber for your parent, we cannot choose but pity you, destined for ever to be framed so vilely, when you might be gushing freely from some moss-grown lion's jaw, a few paces off; where weary contadini should bless you in drinking, and come on cheered and hearty to the *Lotto* in the square beyond.

This same *Lotto* it is which gives the little Piazza its claim to your attention: even to yours, strangers, looking coldly at Rome for the first time, before her life-blood has fired you in the contact with her, and when Rome is still a city to you—nothing more.

But as a city only, you, who are thinkers at all, may draw near and give her a thought. You know the old saying of Goethe about the "*volle Menschen-leben*"—the "press of life," as it were, deepest, tenderest, most tragic, where it is thickest "pressed"?

And here you may see a city's heart, open, seething, betraying itself; showing its hidden joys and its past sorrows, its hope, its despair, and its recklessness undisguised.

In such a simple fashion, too, over what seems so small a matter. The *Lotto*—a weekly prize-drawing, a lottery—government protecting it, the priesthood sanctifying it, what can there be amiss?

Come and see.

The crowd is thickening. Not a very large crowd, and such a patient one. Huddling together, they are talking in hushed whispers, with eyes fixed constantly on a long, narrow balcony overhead. There is some drapery of red about the balcony, and signs of coming life and movement there, as down below. There is a black board with five gaping spaces: the people know those spaces well.

"I found my number by the birthday of thy mother, Paolo," says one, whispering.

"And I, by the teeth in the holy skull of San Giorgio in Velabro."

"And I, by the drops of blood that fell when Filippo, the painter, cut his hand a fortnight since."

At this a young woman of the crowd turned suddenly round upon the last speaker, her dark eyes kindling wonderfully. Her black hair was fastened by a silver pin, crowned by a silver hand.

"The hand is open, see you, friend!" said the man behind her;

"the beautiful one is free then, still. A sharp look you gave, my beauty, when I spoke just now. I trod not on thy skirt, eh?—'tis too short for that."

But the girl, pulling a thick tress of her hair across the silver hand, stepped aside, and was standing now with eyes fiercely fixed on the balcony.

Now all eyes are fixed; all faces look fierce. Four or five figures are standing alone, by the red drapery. Several officials, a priest, and a boy dressed in white; an acolyte, perhaps, from some neighbouring church.

One of the officials has his say first. Then the priest. Thirdly, a glass wheel filled with numbered tickets, is whirled swiftly round by a handle attached to one side. When they have whirled and mixed and remixed the mass of little papers, the wheel is stopped. The boy draws up either sleeve to his elbows, makes the sign of the cross upon his breast, and inserts his hand into the glass wheel.

There is a breathless silence. The boy withdraws his hand.

Number Five. One of the five black spaces is filled in an instant, while a roar, deep and low, rises from the people.

Silence again.

"Trenti-due! Numero trenti-due!" cries a voice in the balcony; and another of the black spaces is filled.

One hundred and twelve, and ninety-five, are next drawn.

A space is still gaping in the black board—just one.

We can see now how poor and miserable is this waiting crowd—half starved, pale faced, so thinly clothed for the most part. Here and there a woman shivering, for all the Roman sun that is shining down upon her; shivering, and wrapping a tattered shawl about her, as if she would bind the restless, anxious spirit that is looking out through her hungry eyes. Another, holding a child in arms that are trembling; a third, resting her chin upon the nearest shoulder, be it of friend or stranger, and peering through at the one gaping space above.

The hoarse murmur wrung from the crowd as each number takes its place, and one gains while hundreds lose, rises to a sound half moan, half shriek, as the last is run up swiftly, and a voice cries loud and clear,

"Uno!"

But sight is swifter than sound, and, before the voice has died into an echo, the haggard faces have been turned away. One by one they slink off, downcast and dejected. In that sea of troubled restless humanity, the five who have been winners are lost to sight.

One by one, one by one, they shuffle on their several ways. A curse here, a sigh there; but for the most part a sullen, stolid resignation, as of hearts hardened to disappointments such as these.

The Piazza Madama is clear now for a week to come.

Only one man remains ; tall, fair-haired, unlike the moving rabble that has gone. He is shading his eyes with his hand, and looking down a by-street at something passing out of sight.

That is Filippo, the painter.

He hesitates only a moment, and then the by-street swallows him also.

"Thine is the face," said he to himself, thinking in Italian, for all his locks are so fair and foreign. "If thou wilt lend me that face, poor girl, thou'lt have a better kerchief for thy comely neck. By Maria, a neck of beauty ! Come, don't fear, Filippo ; thou'rt used to such bargainings as these."

And yet he feared, as following with swift steps, he found himself side by side with the object of his pursuit—the girl whom we have noticed in the Piazza, with the silver hand laid open in her hair.

"Hast thou lost in the cursed *Lotto*, thou beautiful maiden ?" he asked at last, summoning up his courage to address her, and trying to look in her face as he spoke.

"And if I have," she returned, proudly, looking over her shoulder, "what is that to thee, a stranger in Rome ?"

Filippo laughed. "A stranger to thee, may be, Signorina, but not to Rome. Nor is thy face new to me."

"If 'tis of my face you would speak, stranger," said the girl, drawing herself up, and her dark eyes flashing, "have a care. Say your say, here in the open street, and then suffer me to pass by to my home."

Filippo, with a lack of the Italian impudence his fluent tongue might claim for him, coloured hotly, and was silenced for a moment. Then he said, stopping short,—

"Here, then, in the open street, since you desire it. You misunderstand me, madam. I am a painter, and as such alone I dare address you. Nay, as such alone do I desire it," he added warmly, for her manner had nettled him. "And as I make a fair and honourable offer, I hold that you may treat it with civility at least. Or stay ; I have a better offer yet to make. Have you a mother or parent to whom I can speak instead of you, who seem so hotly to resent it ?"

Her manner softened a little.

"Signor Filippo,—" she began.

"Ah ! then I am not a stranger, after all."

The colour that had left his cheek rushed into hers, as she bit her lip angrily.

"You are too sharp for such as me," she answered pettishly. "If I have been sullen and impudent in my bearing towards you, believe, if you please, that it has become my habit, against my better will. I have no parent : I live alone."

"You ? alone ! And in what part of this city, may I ask you, madam, do you trust yourself alone ?"

"I am no madam," said she, proudly. "Call me what I am, and nothing more."

"At present I am at a loss on that point," said Filippo, "and I leave it to you whether I am to be enlightened or not."

"A Trasteverine," she answered.

"And you live——"

"In the Trastevere."

"Alone!" muttered Filippo again.

"It has a harsh hearing for you, signor, no doubt, that word 'alone.' " And the round "*sola*," with a quiet emphasis upon it, and a lowering of her voice, fell like a pearl upon Filippo's saddened ear.

"I know the meaning well enough," he answered. "I too live alone. But you—you have *no* protector in Rome?"

"This!" she said quickly; and a little silver dagger snatched from some hidden sheath was flashing in Filippo's eyes.

He smiled, and said, "I am glad thou hast this at least—though I would thou hadst a better champion."

His voice had changed its tone three several times—from the almost impudent gallantry with which he first addressed her, to the stiff formality of "madame" and "you;" and now again unconsciously he had come back to the "thou" and "thee," with a softened voice and a gentler manner, and she did not reprove him. Perhaps she felt that this was the natural and simple, and the other the strained and unnatural and untrue.

And then he told her that he was poor; and that made all the difference. She too softened then, as if she found herself more on an even footing with him; as if some chord vibrated now between them, hitherto untouched.

They had wandered on unconsciously. Now they were at the Marmorata, and she had seated herself on one of the rugged blocks that lie there.

The sun was setting, and the slow Tiber was fired here and there into a bronzed gold. Wine-carts from the country were nearing the town, whose drivers sang sweetly and lustily in the still evening air. Passers-by hurried their steps; the great gun from Saint Angelo boomed out into the calm.

Filippo's companion stood up.

"I must be gone, signor," she said, putting her coldest manner on again as if it were a mantle; "else you will have to remind me of my manners, as, indeed, you have." And she glanced at the watch he had just replaced in his pocket.

Filippo coloured and said, hastily,—

"I did but look to see if it were with the gun. How sharp you are with me, Bianca."

"Who said you might call me Bianca?" she replied, hotly. But even Filippo could see her anger was partly feigned.

"Thou didst put it in my mouth," he answered, softly; "and when I see thee, thou and thy name answer each to each. Wert thou not Bianca, thou couldst be nothing else."

"And yet," she said, shivering, "'tis a name of ill-omen."

"Why so?" he asked.

"Because my mother bore it; and her mother before her; and they did not know how to spell 'happiness.' 'Tis a strange word to some, Signor Filippo; stranger than 'sola' to me and thee." And her lip curled with a touch of simple irony.

Filippo gave a sigh, half spoke, and then was silent. After a pause,—

"Why did they give thee a name so freighted?" he asked.

"It was their only heritage," she said; "and," here the scorn returned to her mouth that had of late become a stranger to it, "and because the *priest* would have had me called by some saintly name—Agnese, Catherina, Maria. And my mother cared nothing for the saints."

"She was not, then, of your faith?"

"What knowest *thou* of my faith? I am of *her* faith, doubtless."

"And what is that?" asked Filippo.

She shrugged her shoulders, and gave a short bitter laugh that chilled Filippo.

"Trasteverine!" she said.

"Dost not believe in the good God, then, Bianca?"

"I know of none," she said. "If there be a God better than such I see in marble every day, he is too high for me to reach to."

"Who dost thou pray to, Bianca?"

"To her called the Mother of God, if at all, Signor Filippo. But I know of nought to pray for. 'Tis a long day since Bianca prayed."

She looked round with a mournful stare of desolation in her large eyes at the slow Tiber flowing beside them. The sunlight had faded from its sluggish waters, and they were grey and murky now, from the image of the darkening twilight sky.

"Bianca!" said Filippo, drawing nearer to her, "the twilight has entered into thy soul, I think. Let me take thee to thy home; thou art cold and weary."

"Yes!" she said, starting; "if I would keep my heritage, such as it is, I must give no cause to Roman tongues to blab. Then they would say I were not even worthy to be Bianca!"

She looked round wistfully over her shoulder as they turned away.

"What art thou gazing at?" asked Filippo.

"To see I had not left my dagger," said she. But she turned away her face, as if it would not lend itself to back her words.

"Thou dost not need it while I am with thee, dost thou?" he said.

She answered nothing; and he, looking in her face and reading there, pressed his query no further.

* * * * *

When Filippo and his companion reached the church of Santa Maria in Frastevere, Bianca halted, and bade him farewell.

"Farewell, then," he said, sadly ; "when shall I see thee again?"

"That I know not," she answered, carelessly. "But you have made a slight omission, Signor Filippo. We have talked of everything but the reason of our meeting. Unless that were but a base excuse to thrust your company upon me, speak out now!"

"Bianca!" said Filippo, reproachfully. She hung her head; I think it was for the first time. "Dost thou still hold me at a distance from thee, and must I too drop the 'thou' and 'thee' to-day has made so sweet and so familiar?"

There was no reply.

"Fare thee well, then," said Filippo; "perchance at some other time thou mayst not be too proud to lend thy face half an hour in common courtesy to a painter. I promise thee, no word shall pass my lips but those that bear upon my art, upon the *pose* of thy neck or shoulder. And the sitting, if thou dost grant it me, shall be where thou choosest, and in whose company thou feelest most secure. When thou art——"

"Thou didst not speak of sitting till now," she interrupted, with a touch of sadness and submission in her voice.

"Nay, and I had not now, except thou hadst driven me to it,—breaking up my dream, Bianca, after a fashion, and saying, 'Awake! awake, Filippo, artist! and come to terms and business.' I started in pursuit of business, indeed," he went on; "but seeking a daisy for my canvas, I found it no daisy, but a rose. And looking into the rose, Bianca," here he fixed his eyes upon her down-dropped lids, "is it great marvel that for a while the painter was forgotten in the man?—that the rose itself sufficed me, the freshness of it, the dew of sadness on it?—that, till you minded me again, my heart had risen above my head, and I had forborne to drag down God's perfect handiwork to be this poor hand's model? Eh, Bianca, was it marvel?"

"But painters love to try where they approve," said she, looking up.

"And so have I *till now*," he answered, with a soft emphasis.

"If thou wouldst try, come to-morrow, in the morning; thou wilt find me waiting at the corner here. Or shall I come to thee? Why not?" she continued, quickly, seeing he looked somewhat doubtful. "If I stay here, there is none can be my guardian. Neighbours are near enough to cavil, but too far to help. I keep my good name clean for my heart's sake first, and for my peace next. But if I come where thou bidst me, none shall know there my business, nor shall it be business of theirs to prate. Good-night, then, Signor Filippo; hast still a mind to try?"

"Ay, Bianca! a mind to try—a mind to try!" he answered,

dreamily. "But," and he smiled, "I fear me God holds the copy-right."

"The great God is much in thy mind," said she, turning slowly from him.

"As should be with painters and with poets, Bianca."

"Good-night!" she said, after a pause.

"Good-night!" he answered, standing and gazing after her as her fair figure grew dim in distance.

And as he paced homewards the only sound that followed Filippo, the painter, was the empty echo of his own footsteps in the deserted streets, and a soul-echo louder yet, that said, "*sola—sola!*"

Presently the two echoes seemed to blend, and to every "*sola*" fell a lonely footfall, and to every footfall a mournful "*sola*."

And yet Filippo was not all unhappy.

It was not long after daylight the next morning that Bianca opened her eyes. She was not used to be so early, for the day had few attractions to offer her, and most days were too long for her happiness. But she had not lain many moments conscious before she rose and commenced to dress. Beppo, her dog, marvelling at the early disturbance, yawned, winked his sleepy eyes, and jumped off the bed where he had slept, to look out at the window Bianca had opened. There he stood, both paws upon the sill, sniffing the morning air, and wondering what the day had in store for him and for his mistress.

Bianca had never been longer at her toilet than to-day. It seemed as if she were ashamed of her alacrity. She took a rickety chair while she dressed her long dark plaits, instead of turning them up and curling them round her head with the swift hand of a conjuror, as was her wont. And she placed the chair at such an angle that she could look down the narrow street as she sat, and combed, and plaited.

Wonderful hair it was, with the blue sheen of the raven's wing upon it, the light feathering tips reaching to her knees, and the silken plaits lying upon her round white shoulders and the fair linen bodice she wore; one drawn through under her arm and round her waist, where she began to tie the end with a ribbon—a black ribbon that looked black no longer, since it had come in contact with this wondrous dye of God's own making.

The silver pin still lay upon the table, when Filippo came round the nearest corner and stood looking from house to house, and window to window, with an anxious concern that made Bianca's heart leap within her.

"It is a weary day since one has looked for thee, Bianca," she said to herself, and her chiselled lip trembled though she only spoke in thought. Then drawing her coloured apron from the chair on which it hung, she thrust her pin hastily through her hair, and calling

Beppo to follow her, passed swiftly down the long stone stair and into the street.

Filippo, with a glad smile, had opened his lips for a salutation as he came towards her; but Bianca, passing him without a glance, muttered under her breath, "Not here; go on, and follow me presently. When we are at the church I can speak to thee—not before."

II.

"HERE, then, thou canst speak to me," said Filippo when they met under the shadow of the church. "Speak, Bianca, for the sound of thy voice has been too long hushed to me already."

"What should I say?" she asked.

"That thou art glad to see me; that never night was so long and sleepless; that never dawn was so long delayed."

"Thou hast a good courage, Signor Filippo, truly!"

"I speak while I may, Bianca. There is that within me tells me I shall soon enough keep silence."

"How mean'st thou?" she asked, startled. "Thou art not leaving Rome?"

"Not unless thou should'st drive me from it. When thou art dead, or dead to me, then, indeed, Filippo and Rome must part company. I fear I shall show thee what I mean by that silence, if I see thee more, and if thou should'st spurn me as thou hast done until now. I fear, and yet I fear not; for 'tis a golden silence, Bianca. Perchance thou hast known it; hast thou, sweet one?"

"Thou talkest in parables," she answered, still looking down, as they paced slowly together down the street.

"Alas! that is the forerunner of my silence. Could I speak plainly, I would speak now, before my thoughts outgrow my words. But I fear to speak, Bianca."

She did not answer.

"Tell me," said he suddenly, "is it so? Hast thou known this silence? Hast thou been loved?"

"I were a poor maiden if not," she answered a little proudly. "Dost see that beggar by the fountain? Think'st thou that *she* has not been loved? Ay, she will tell thee a score of lovers have wooed her; not that that were great boast, but 'tis hard to pass through life, to be a woman, and not to be troubled by a lover."

"Bianca," said Filippo, "hast thou ever loved?"

"Ay, Signor Filippo, I *have* loved."

Filippo passed his hand over his forehead, and an expression of pain came into his hitherto tranquil face.

"Bianca," said he again, "thou art not angry? Wilt thou suffer me to ask a question yet?"

"I have answered, have I not? And I am ready still to answer

what thou wilt; only it shall be *truth*, remember. And *remember*," she said quickly, "that thou didst *ask*. I did not tell thee, Signor Filippo, of my own free choice."

"Thou art so calm," he said; "it cannot be to thee such pain to answer as it is grief to me to wait thy words. Oh, Bianca! thou sayest thou hast loved. Tell me, dost love *now*, Bianca? Ah! say thou dost not love! Say it is past, Bianca! Say thy soul is free!"

Bianca lifted up her eyes, and, looking Filippo in the face for the first time that day, she answered,—

"I love *now*, Signor Filippo."

He gave a low groan, and his head bent as if he were carrying his sorrow upon him as a crown.

"Then I am undone," said he.

After this there was a silence so long and profound between the two, that they reached the door of Filippo's studio before it was broken.

"Dost still desire me to sit for thy picture?" asked Bianca.

"As thou wilt," said he, dejectedly. "Yes, if thou wilt." As he said that, she drew back. "Come, Bianca, thy picture were better than nothing, sweet one. I am at least blessed in having thee once across my threshold. Wilt thou that the old wife below should come and bear thee company? Thou hast thy dagger at least, I see; perhaps that may do me a kindness yet."

"How that?"

"Since thou hast taken life from me, wilt finish the blow with that, and put me out of pain?"

She smiled sadly.

"It may do work as hard yet, Signor, but hardly so foul, I think. 'Tis a virgin sheath yet, I trust; but daggers are not made to reap the corn. Who knows what good service Bianca may do herself with thee, thou silver shining friend?"

"Art sad, then, too? Why dost thou talk so wildly?—thou who hast love enough to make thee spurn *my* love——"

"When did I spurn thy love?"

"It *is* spurned if thou love elsewhere. But dost thou mean," he asked hurriedly, holding up the easel he had lifted from its corner in both hands, and fearing to put it down lest he should lose her answer, "dost thou mean that perchance the old love may in time make away——"

"That never, Filippo."

"Then by the stars of heaven what mean'st thou? Wilt make me mad with thy delay?"

"'Tis delay I ask," said she, firmly. "We have come here to paint. and to be painted. When this is over, then thou may'st have thy chance again, Signor Filippo."

"At sunset then—this sunset—before another night falls, thou wilt suffer me to ask those questions of thee anew? Thou wilt answer them, Bianca; thou wilt not deceive me?"

"Nay, I will not deceive thee. Thou wilt ask me then these two questions anew. 'Hast thou loved, Bianca?' and 'Dost love still?' and I will give thee an answer truly and duly as a Trasteverine should."

"Amen!" said Filippo, solemnly; and he covered his face with his hands for a moment, while his lips moved. Then he fell to painting Bianca, fast and eagerly, with throbbing pulses, as he was not used to paint. And Bianca sat there calm and motionless, the black hair loosed about her shoulders, the glorious eyes upturned, the beautiful mouth closed upon the words that Filippo hungered so to hear.

"Ah mouth!" said he to himself, as his pencil strove to follow it upon the canvas, "how hardly art thou shut to me, as painter and as man! If she would speak—if she would speak—maybe it would look less cruel; and yet I cannot brook that she should talk of common things to-day."

"Beautiful mouth!" said he, as his mood changed, as moods of lovers will—"beautiful mouth! stay locked for ever thus, rather than open with a cruel 'No,' which should blast a soul that only lives on hope! Ah God, great God, who sayest Thou art our Father! Thou didst make this mouth: cause it to be merciful, like to Thee! Thou didst frame this head, this hand, this woman of perfection: give her to me, I pray Thee, for at least a space, and I shall only learn of Heaven the more!"

So the hours went by, while Filippo's soul was on the rack, while his long painter's fingers did his work—half toil, half ecstacy, half pain; while Bianca sat placid and motionless before him, looking into his troubled face with a changeless, unpitying gaze.

Sometimes, if he had for an instant forgotten his madness in his picture, and had seemed to lend his soul's eyes more to that than to the model, or his anguish, on looking suddenly again at Bianca, he would discover a tenderer light in the clear depth of her eyes that lifted him to hope. But, seeing he looked and stayed his pencil, she would harden again into stolid indifference as before.

Filippo sighed: the clocks clanged out their hours; Bianca moved a hand or a foot—no more. At midday he offered her such refreshment as he had—some olives, with a piece of bread and a little wine. She took the bread, but refused the rest. And after this all was silence; for trying once to kiss the hand she held out for the bread, he was rebuked by a look and an uplifted finger.

"Ah God!" he said, reverently, as he turned to his easel, "was Thy sun ever so long in heaven before!"

God's sun set at last, and over Rome it set in a golden glory.

Black against it rose the grand dome of God's cathedral into His sky, and cool over the parched city fell a dewy mantle.

Two figures issuing out of a low doorway in the Via Condotti kept their tryst with the sunset, and made towards the Appian Way.

Filippo would have had his answer then and there, within the crazy upstairs studio ; but Bianca, saying she was cramped and weary, begged that they should go out into the fresh evening air.

As he had foreseen, a silence fell upon him then, although the time for speaking had arrived.

"Sunset!" said he, "how I have invoked thee this livelong day! and now I fain would send thee hence for a little longer space!"

When he strove to speak, Bianca bade him be silent till they were past the town. She trusted him as little as he could trust himself, and so they still journeyed on in silence.

It seemed as if the whole day had been long silences. And yet such silence was pregnant with thoughts and memories for them both.

Passing under the Porta San Sebastiano, Filippo and Bianca emerged at length on the Appian Way. As they crossed the dark shadows thrown by the great arch of the massive gateway, Filippo halted a moment, and looked up at the rude inscription overhead. Bianca waited for him. He sighed, and then they resumed their silent walk.

It was not till Rome was well behind them, and the tombs on either side the road had thickened, that Filippo grew stubborn and refused to go further.

"Bianca," said he, "all day I have waited; till sunset—past sunset. I can wait no longer."

She had seated herself on a tomb, the crisp burnt grass of which was damp now with the evening dews. She looked up for an instant, and said—

"Thou hast asked no question."

"I ask it now. And, Bianca, if thou hast brought me hither only to torment me—Ah me!"

She looked down only, and plucked a weed with a blue flower from the mound—a little eye-like flower that seemed to gaze up into the liquid human eyes bent over it.

Filippo came closer, and bent too, but not over the flower.

"Bianca," said he for the hundredth time, but with a voice that trembled strangely, "the time has come—God help thee and me. Hast loved, Bianca, before to-day?"

"Ay, Signor Filippo."

"And dost love still, Bianca?" with a moan in his voice that might have moved the marble woman yonder, lying in the dust.

Bianca looked up again, and again but for an instant, and in a

voice maddening in its calmness, she said slowly, as if each word should reach his soul.

"And I love *still*, Filippo."

Was it a faint breeze that crossed the drear Campagna, was it the rustle of the grass beneath the hand of Bianca, was it a sigh, a whisper—what was it that reached Filippo's fevered brain, and brought him quivering to his knees before this woman who had so spurned him?

"Didst speak?" he gasped, clasping her hands fiercely in his own, "didst speak his name who is thy beloved? Answer me, by the love of Heaven!"

"Wouldst hear it now?"

"Ay, now! before I rise—who is it that is loved of thee? Who wins thee from me? Ah, accursed Filippo! God has forsaken thee indeed. And thou didst dream thyself so blest but yesterday! hadst such fair visions of a wife to be thine own—to fill thine empty heart—thy cheerless home—to still this raging madness that has seized thee and made thee less than man. Ah, God!" he cried, and in his anguish he flung himself upon the earth like some poor passionate child, and sobbed out his sorrow to the ground.

He hardly felt Bianca's light hand upon his shoulder; but after an instant he started up as if the touch had stung him back to life.

"Go from me!" he cried, "stay not here to mock the sorrows of a man thou hast undone—thou woman-Judas—thou betrayer—thou——"

"Filippo!" and it was Bianca's turn to kneel; but kneeling she still was raised above him, and had to bend to look into his face. "I came to tell thee who I love," she said gently. "Be not angry, good Signor Filippo: maybe thou wilt not greatly mislike to hear it said."

"Who?" said he, hoarsely, raising his blood-shot eyes and haggard face to hers.

"Thee!"

As flood of sunlight after thunderstorm, when green and golden the wet trees shine out upon the grey bank of disappearing cloud, so over Filippo, the painter, and his sorrow came the sweet glory of exceeding joy: so green and golden the boughs of hope fulfilled, and of ineffable content came freshly to the foreground, and shook the dew-drops from their leaves so heavy laden.

"I dream!" he said; "I dream!" But there he lay, his face upon her hands, her warm breath like a blessing falling on him, her voice grown tender in his ear.

"I have been cruel, Filippo, my Filippo," she whispered. "I have been vile to try thee so. But if thou knewest how thine

anguish lifted me to bliss—to know myself so loved by thee, by thee!" And Bianca's head bowed till it touched the head of Filippo, when the touch spoke for them in its own mute language, and they said no more.

Presently, learning to bear his gladness, but still in low hushed tones, as if he feared to scare it by a sound, he lifted up his head, and sitting there at the feet of Bianca, Filippo's tender questions met tender answers, and little by little the sweet truth travelled to his heart that he was loved.

"And thou couldst so torment me, Bianca?" he said, with soft reproach; "saying thou hadst loved already."

"So I had—thee, thee, thee. Filippo, I loved thee in such a fashion as a woman may who is not loved again—before ever eyes of thine fell upon me."

"O Bianca!"

"Ay, Filippo. Mindest thou a fortnight since, upon the Cæsars' Palace, when thou wert scraping the hard earth from a marble hand thou hadst picked up among the ruins, how thou didst cut thy finger deeply, and the blood ran? I stood by, Filippo: 'twas my kerchief that staunched it."

"Thine, Bianca? my Bianca! But I did not see thee."

"Nay, for I did not give it thee. A woman standing by tied up thy hand. She asked me for my kerchief, or I had not given it, even to thee."

"And didst love me then, Bianca?"

"Not having loved before, I may mistake, Filippo. But those fair locks of thine did not soon pass my memory. Such locks, Filippo! Where didst thou find them?"

"I bought them not at any barber's," said he, smiling; "they come of English blood, Bianca. Art averse to that race? I pray say not, my sweet one."

"Nay, now I love the race," said she, passionately, but in so low a voice Filippo could but just catch the sound.

"Art afraid thou shouldst be overheard, thou angel? There is none here to heed us; the tombs only bear us company."

"Ah!" said she, standing up, "I would thou hadst not minded me of that, Filippo. 'Tis a sad place to tell our love-tale in." And her face clouded over as she looked out over the desolate waste before them.

Filippo took her hand.

"We will go back, sweetheart," said he. "I fear the night air for thee more than the shades of all these buried dead. Thou art my own—dost feel that, Bianca? Art happy, soul of my soul?"

"Thou needst not ask. It seems joy is an easy lesson in the conning; for but one hour have I had the page towards me, and already it is not wholly strange. And yet I would we had not trysted

here," she murmured, still looking back at the green mounds behind them, and shivering a little as she looked.

"Fear not," said he, tenderly drawing her on. "Thy time of sorrow is past by; the future is all sunshine, Bianca. I have not pained thee, sweet one!—what makes thee then so pale?"

"Thou didst not pain me," she said, with a forced smile. "'Tis an old malady, a pain in the side here,—near the heart. It does not long trouble me, Filippo: do not fear, beloved one. 'Tis gone now. Ah! here we are at the gates again, Filippo! How swiftly the time has gone since we came by."

"Didst never tell me of that pain before, soul of mine?" said Filippo still troubled by her words, and the pale face she wore.

"I did but know thee yesterday!" she answered, with a smile so bright, that the gloom that had come over them was swept away.

"But yesterday! How good the great God was to make that yesterday!" said Filippo. "Seest thou, Bianca," he went on as they came beneath the arch again, "that rude writing overhead?"

"I see it," said she, looking up.

"Knowest thou what it is? 'Tis in memory of a victory, some thousand years ago, when Goths came forth to conquer Rome, and failed. I tried to read an omen there as we passed through, Bianca."

"I heard thee sigh," said she.

"I feared," he said. "But now I have forgotten how to fear. Thou shalt forget it too, sweet-heart."

C. C. FRASER-TYTLER.

(*To be continued.*)

THE CARDINAL'S LAMENT.

ROME : EASTER DAY, 1872.

O PERFECT bride of God, renew thy tears;
Waken, my Rome, my chosen; feel the chains
Around thy sacred limbs; the iron weighs
Thy sweet hand earthward: lonely art thou bound,
Rome, in thy chains a mighty broken queen,
Staring with wild eyes at the Easter dawn—
Thro' all the night most patient till the ray—
The awful dumb dead night, wherein the Lord's
White body lay, with red wounds of the nails,
Waiting the resurrection touch to move;
And all the watcher angels o'er his shroud
Held awful silence, dim among the gloom,
Nor dared to stir or rustle any wing!

In hope they waited; we have watched in none.
Lo! yonder sailing mist of signal rose
Is Easter, our celestial rising-day—
Easter in Rome, where Easter meant so much,
And drew the world a pilgrim; where men deemed
Her gorgeous consecrations here on earth
Some foretaste of the festival in Heaven.

Beautiful sleeps the city in her mist.
Still are the fountains, still her mighty squares,
Untrodden all her labyrinth of ways.
The very doves are silent and asleep
That build about St. Peter's. All the trees
In the Pope's garden seem blurred heads of cloud.
The great dome looms dull brown, unburnished yet;
Beneath whose soundless aisles in glory sleep
The dead Popes in their order, pale and still
And patient till the coming of their Christ;
That Easter of all graves, when Christ shall call
To his doom-angel, "Blow, the hour is ripe,
And ended is the sorrow of my own,
And ready is my sentence on the dead;
I have completed all my saints, and come.
Gather the nations. I will judge and end!"

Come! for the earth is heavy, and we mourn.
Ah, spare us many Easters like this last;

THE CARDINAL'S LAMENT.

For now the ungodly chide at us, and say,
 We have no Christ this Easter to arise,
 We watch corruption by some common grave,
 Our Christ is in the ground, he will not hear.
 We are dreamers, how in some old fabled tale,
 A good man died unjustly, lay in earth,
 How soldiers sealed the cavern of his rest ;
 How lovely dawned that Easter, when of old
 The Galilean women came to weep,
 Loving the gentle prophet that was gone.
 So far the tale is credible, but now
 We hear of certain angels, when indeed
 Philosophy has settled there were none.
 We hear of how the cold dead Christ arose—
 But one wise Frenchman wrote a pretty book,
 And proved that dead men always fell to dust.

So they blaspheme the watchers at thy grave—
 Ah, God, the infidel is master here.
 Here in thy Rome, thy last Jerusalem,
 Thy righteous rose, the city of thy priests.
 Is it well seen, O God ? The abominable
 Hath circled us weak fishes with his net.
 His chain is on thy vicar, lord of stars ;
 The prisoner father droops in lonely halls,
 The purple princes of the conclave weep.
 While northern vermin, exiles, Piedmontese,
 Scum of the alp-root, turn the holy town
 To one vast barrack-yard of noisy war ;
 Set sentinels, have beacons, order camps,
 Clatter along our squares, blow horns, beat drums ;
 Until the voices of our rhythmic bells
 Are shamed to silence in a place of siege,
 And mighty Rome lies dumb without a word.

Behold a trumpet from the Capitol
 Calls through the shallow vapour of the dawn.
 " The night in heaven is done, but not in Rome,
 Her eyes are tender to sustain the sun—
 She loves her prison-shadows more than day."
 A bugle answers from the Palatine,
 " Great Rome is vanquished, fallen. We have come
 And conquered the impregnable, the joy
 Of God, the lamp of nations. At her gates
 We rode, and blew a careless blast and won.
 She is bound, we have bound her, we !"

And who are these
 Who call so proudly out of Caesar's nest,

"We are Italians and have conquered Rome?"
 If ye indeed be sons of Italy,
 Ye are risen against your mother, with foul hands
 Ye have smitten upon your parent's holy face,
 Ye have bruised her sacred lips until they bleed:
 Your hands are red: ask pardon on your knees.
 "She turned a tyrant, therefore is she bound;
 Turin hath conquered Rome." O deed of shame!
 The weazel triumphs in the wolf-cub's lair.
 Shall Rome hew Piedmond's wood, go to the well
 For Piedmont; fetch and carry, as she's told,
 Take buffets in the service of this thing?
 Rome with her grand commemorative past,
 Searching her annals, reading on her tombs,
 Hath only heard of Piedmont yesterday;
 As pasture of some hunger-bitten cows
 Fed in the misty alp-heart up in heaven;
 A realm of neat-herds, frozen in the cold.
 Are these thy spoilers, city of the sun,
 At whose great royal breasts the baby mouths
 Of emperors drew nurture? Is this thou,
 Whose mother-vein abounding gave to these
 Their after-strength to bruise and break the world?
 Thy power was on them and they overcame,
 And meted out the immeasurable earth
 Among the purple nurslings of their loins.
 Thy yesterdays, my Rome, are wonderful,
 But awful change hath snapt thee in its snare,
 With iron edge of strange calamities.
 Bring down, my queen, thy bosom on the dust,
 Shame thy bright hair with ashes, be their slave;
 This hungry tribe of ragged mountaineers,
 Who drape themselves in robes that Brutus wore,
 And say, "We are Italy!"

Return, keep cows,
 Bring fodder in. Ye are herdsmen, brutish, boors!
 Our common dust is nobler than your lives,
 Where every tread may be a Roman's grave.
 But your realm rose a mushroom in the night,
 Sardinians. "Nay," ye answer, "we are risen
 Being the sons of progress in the south;
 Ours is the 'liberal' kingdom, typifies
 The new emergence of the baby-world
 To ampler knowledge. Turin with her heel
 Upon Rome's neck, means old theology
 Prostrate before philosophy's new dawn;
 Victor in Rome means light in the human soul—

THE CARDINAL'S LAMENT.

But you, who blame our Piedmont, have good heed,
 You with the tonsure, teacher of the folds,
 Priest, prophet, in whatever name or robe,
 You lead God man-ward, and raise men to God—
 Behold, to all your sort the crucial hour
 Arrives, the world-child strengthens out its limbs,
 Its papment season never can return ;
 Cleanse your religion clean of mythic lore,
 Heave out old forms and fables to the deep.
 The peoples roar for reasonable meat,
 Keen they discern the draff among the food ;
 Humour their fancies else they will away ;
 The sheep will crawl for pasture to the wolf ;
 And leave you droning mass in empty fanes,
 And tear the titles to your revenues.
 Therefore, O priest, chop science with the best,
 Cram us with reason, demonstrate, convince,
 Avoid all dogma, or apologise
 If gritty Athanasian bits protrude.
 Lead us in roads historically laid,
 Well lamped at intervals, without a rut
 To jog the queasy conscience into doubt.
 Then quietly thy sheep in tribes shall come,
 And tinkle after with obedient bleats
 Him with the crook, the triple cap, and keys.
 Hold to the causeway Reason ; Faith's a slough
 On either hand. One tread, you're ankle deep,
 The next inextricably over-ears.
 The flock forbade its pastor to diverge,
 So far as hoof bit rock it followed him ;
 Here it tried footing, sniffed, and halted dead ;
 He blundered on, the quagmire sucked him in ;
 His woolbacks move without him ; serve him right ! "

Which is a parable ! and comes to this,—
 An evil people, greedy of a sign,
 Must comprehend to worship, analyse
 Ere they adore. Each individual soul
 With his small lantern walks the world alone ;
 He lifts no eyes on heaven's high fitful stars ;
 Indeed he cannot touch, relume, or trim
 Those large white lights of God ; his taper's best,
 Whose feeble sputtering insignificance
 He trimmed himself to grapple with the gloom.

Ye blind and lonely feelers in the dark,
 Ye halt men arrogant, ye wise run mad,
 Who shall provide such gropers with a god,

Before what essence will ye bend your knees ?
Believe in Euclid, worship axioms,
Trust in triangles, to a cube sing hymns !
I see no other worship for the fools.

Have ye not understood, ere time began
Reason and Faith have been unreconciled ;
Their feud is old as ocean, keen as fire ;
As oil and acid mingle so do they.
You cannot build a reasonable faith.
Vain is your labour, if you rear a wall
And smear no mortar in between the chinks.
Ah, teacher, build thy little tower of cards.
Try ! Meet all views, prune, sift, avoid old sores,
Tread upon no man's theologic corns ;
Frame some mild creed with neither back nor bones,
A mist of genial benevolences
To please all round, Budd, Calvin, Moses, Comte.
Fair bodes the scheme in its first fluid stage,—
It makes a tidy pamphlet, well reviewed,—
But crystallize it can't, except around
Some little tiny notion of a god,
Some germ organic in the central haze
To vivify and quicken the inert ;
Some atom-grain of personality
To sweeten and begin a crust of rays.

Here your dilemma rises, man of mind.
Either ignore your god-mote, leave your scheme
A rapid thing to fester on grey shelves,
Limp, theoretic, leprous, flat, inane ;
Or accept something which transcends your rules,
And promulgate your germ-god's attributes ;
Till by degrees your wary pen grows warm,
And the third column of your monograph
Lands you in purest dogma half-way down ;
Then the pace strengthens, acrid, on you flow
Till *finis* dubs you scientific pope,
Damning opponents all to left or right,
As idiots or as rascals. Rome herself
Ne'er fulminated deeper. Hold, my friend :
Remember where we started ; reason and sight,
All else you cut away. Where are we now ?

Your fairest hope is, you may frame at best,
An almost credible theology.
Alas, wise man, that "almost" ruins all,

THE CARDINAL'S LAMENT.

It means you postulate one thing on trust ;
 Be it the least division of a hair,
 One fibre in a gnat ; confession's made
 That some faith's wanted. Faith, say, in a midge.
 Concede me this—I answer, then believe
 In Juggernaut and all his monstrous heads ;
 Size is no test to the deductive brain ;
 In each the mental process is the same.
 Neither the gnat nor idol can be proved,
 You took the midge on trust, accept the god !

The nations are as children, after all ;
 Some blind, some blinkard. You or I of these
 See by some inches further than our nose.
 I grant our reason's keener, but what then ?
 The contradictions in the simplest creed,
 The reasonablest revelation known,
 Are to our wits and those of country clods
 An equal wall of nonsense. We are lithe,
 And they are lame, but Atlas intervenes,
 And neither can o'erleap his barrier rocks.
 Inform a drayman two and two are five,
 He stares and lounges on. Repeat the lie
 To some great thinker gravely, he growls out,
 "Disturb me not ; return, O dunce, to school."
 Suppose God said, "Believe that two straight lines
 Could hedge a space in ; be convinced of this,
 Or miserably perish. On this truth
 My church is founded. All who contradict
 Are lost throughout the abysses of all time."
 Will reason help you here ? You shudder. No.
 Dismiss the fancy, and compare the fact.
 How hath the just God spoken ? He hath bound
 All nations at their peril to receive,
 That perfect God was also perfect man.
 Digest this truth by reason, if you may ;
 Reason won't aid ; at faith arrive you must
 Sooner or later ; and if you take in
 One grain by faith which reason cannot chew,
 You may as well swallow a mountain down,
 And lay all doubt asleep, and rest your brains
 And conscience in a comfortable church ;
 Nor let the devils lash you out to the hills
 To chop dry logic in the barren cold.

What follows ? Has God left the world quite dark ?
 Have all the ages tumbled men to hell

Along the lampless ledges of the past?
Pitiful souls, whose reason led them wrong.
Is there no beacon ready till the dawn,
No light his love hath saved us? Blind, behold
His affluence dwells among us; and ye turn
And answer, "Show us God and it's enough."
Lo, Peter's chair, and God in flesh thereon!

Refuse the truth, hale down his vicar's throne,
Lead back the lees of Rome to mock and spit
At the old venerable saint, whose locks
Are white with many winters of long prayer,
Whose hand is weak with blessing men so long,
Whose kind eyes sadden at your ruffian deeds.
Are ye come up with tumult to destroy?
To quench our only light and leave the world
Eyeless and dark—as here our Easter is.
Destruction is so easy. God allows
The fiends to overturn, that they may feel
Horrible hell around them when all's done,
And awful isolation from their deed.

But, ah, ye errant peoples of God's fold,
How would this holy foster-mother Rome,
Have gathered you between her ample wings,
And called you in beneath her silken plumes,
And yet ye would not. His sweet house and ours
Is surely left unto us desolate;
And God's own chosen flower, celestial Rome,
Is chained lamenting in her Easter dawn.

J. LEICESTER WARREN.

AT THE PHILHARMONIC.

I WENT to hear that music, in order, if it might be, to rid my mind of an absorbing, irritating, personal annoyance, which I knew it was unworthy to ponder over, having graver and nobler anxieties, but could not, for the life of me, dismiss from my thoughts for more than a few moments. The ignoble *worry*—for it deserved no other name—perpetually reappeared, more exasperating and more persistent after each enforced banishment from my mind, and—as the French say of *le naturel*—every time I chased it away, *il revenait au galop*.

It chanced that the piece was a quintette by Mendelssohn, and one which was new to me. It opened with a long-drawn, *sotto-voce* sigh from the violoncello, instantly responded to by a rapid, irritable, indignant little phrase from the first violin, which plainly exclaimed: "*God bless my soul, how is it possible you don't understand!*"

This roused the other four instruments, all of whom endeavoured to soothe and explain, and matters appeared to be getting less agitating when the viola—who, to speak the truth, had merely been repeating, without much earnestness and in a sort of mechanical way, the explanations of the others—suddenly caught up the first violin's point of view, and exclaimed: "*God bless my soul, how is it possible you don't understand!*" This produced a general protest: "But we do understand! don't you hear what we say? why don't you listen!" etc. etc.; to which the first violin added: Why that's precisely what *I* say! "*God bless my soul, how is it possible you don't understand!*"

The viola was somewhat confused at this, and declared that the violin had no occasion to be angry, for that, after all, she was supporting his view of the case; and the two continued for a short time agreeing very amicably together, murmuring "just so," "exactly," "of course," in quite friendly fashion, when the second violin burst out indignantly in his turn, scornfully remarking that it was all very well to go on flattering one another in that way ("They always do!" put in the double-bass), but the real fact of the matter was, that not a single one of them really understood——

"Not understand!" shouted the first violin and viola together, "why we understood from the very first that——" "And so did I," said the double-bass, "I saw at the beginning that——" But here the second violin grew quite desperate, and fairly shrieked out, "*God bless my soul, how is it possible you don't understand!*"

To describe the fury with which all turned upon the second violin at this, would be impossible. The violoncello tried hard to interpose,

and even declared, with some asperity, that matters need never have gone so far if, instead of interrupting him at the very first word he uttered, they had only heard what he had to say ; he even made what seemed to be an attempt to say it, sufficiently loud to be heard above the clamour of the others, but in vain ; and his voice sank at last into a monotonous, grumbling protest, which he kept up until the other four, who, with ever-increasing violence, continued asking each other, all at once : "*God bless my soul, how is it possible you do not understand !*" suddenly came to an abrupt close, evidently from sheer exhaustion and want of breath.

A moment of silence ensued, and the violoncello then repeated his first sigh, more softly and still more sadly than before, and as none of the others had energy left to quarrel with him, remained mournfully master of the situation.

FANATICUS GERMANICUS.

LAISSEZ FAIRE.

"*Prophete rechts, Prophete links,
Das Weltkind in der Mitten.*"

GOETHE'S *Diné* zu Coblenz.

To left, here's B., half-Communist,
Who talks a chastened treason ;
And C., a something-else in *ist*,
To right declaims on Reason.

B., from his "tribune," fulminates
At Throne and Constitution,
Nay, with the walnuts, advocates
Reform by revolution ;

While C.'s peculiar coterie
Have now in full rehearsal
Some patent new Philosophy
To make doubt universal.

And yet—why not ? If zealots burn,
Their zeal has not affected
My taste for salmon and Sauterne,
Or I might have objected :—

Friend B., the argument you choose
Has been by France refuted ;
And C., *mon cher*, your novel views
Are just Tom Paine, diluted ;

There's but one creed,—that's *Laissez faire* ;
Behold its mild apostle !
My dear and honourable *confrères*,
Although you push and jostle,

Not your ephemeral hands,—nor mine,
Time's Gordian knots shall sunder,—
Tom laid three pipes of this old wine :
Who'll drink the last ?—I wonder !

AUSTIN DOBSON.